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IS THERE ANY RESEMBLANCE

BETWEEN

SHAKESPEARE AND BACON?

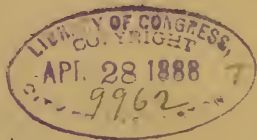
IS THERE ANY RESEMBLANCE

BETWEEN

SHAKESPEARE AND BACON?

In life it (love) doth much mischief, sometimes like a Siren, sometimes like a Fury. You may observe, that amongst all the great and worthy persons (whereof the memory remaineth, either ancient or recent), there is not one that hath been transported to the mad degree of love, which shows that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion.—*Bacon's Essay on Love.*

Though the thing itself be disreputable in the profession of it, yet it is excellent as a discipline, we mean the action of the theatre; for the discipline and corruption of the theatre is of very great consequence. Now of this corruption we have enough. Modern play acting is but a toy, except when it is too biting and satirical, but the ancients used it as a means of educating men's minds to virtue.—*Bacon's Advancement of Learning.*



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PREFACE.

THE following pages are not written with the expectation of affecting the attitude of those who, from some unexplained animus, *desire* to dethrone Shakespeare and to enthrone Bacon ; neither are they expected to interest (although I hope they may) those who think this subject undeserving of serious thought. There is, however, a very large number whose doubts have been awakened, and who are honestly interested, to whom much in the nature of ordinary information that directly concerns this inquiry may not be easily accessible, and to those I trust the matter that I have collected and the conclusions I have drawn may be acceptable.

I have sought to present such points as appeal to reason and common sense, and have not elaborated them as might easily be done, as the facts in themselves are convincing to my judgment, and seem to need very little in the shape of argument to emphasize their force. I have quoted Bacon and his biographers very freely in order to show that in every quality he was the opposite of Shakespeare ; that he never did anything except for profit or fame, and would not have bestowed any production upon the world without recognition or reward.

I have sought to show that he had neither the mind to form the language, the fancy to create the sentiment, the heart to feel the truth and beauty, nor the generosity to deny himself the authorship of such productions as the Shakespeare plays, and that absolutely no ground existed for concealment of poetic genius that would have aided his ambition: that he distrusted the permanency of the English language, disparaged the stage, condemned as wasted the time spent on fiction and works of the imagination, spoke contemptuously of love, and sneered at lovers.

I have quoted some of the verse that Bacon positively did write, and have shown that for over forty years of his life (before Shakespeare's appearance and after his death) Bacon never wrote anything in the nature of poetry except the versification of a half dozen psalms, which his historians speak of as "flat effects," "bad lines," "ridiculous failures," and "low order," and which his present champions studiously ignore.

I have referred to Bacon's antagonistic attitude toward the play of Richard II., but I have hardly given full importance to the fact of Shakespeare's activity at that time, as the records show that there was no cessation in the production of the plays. In the year (1601) of the Essex trials and executions, in which Bacon was so prominent, he also wrote, and rewrote under the exacting critical revision of the queen, a jus-

tification of her course. It was submitted to her ministers, and received the most careful examination and scrutiny before she would allow it to be issued. In that year *Hamlet* and *All's Well that Ends Well* were produced, much other writing and publishing done, and Shakespeare's company were travelling in Scotland part of the year.

It is impossible for me to imagine Bacon indulging in such absorbing dramatic recreation at such a time and under these circumstances; yet the more marvellous his performances are supposed to be, the better they fulfill the expectations of those who have no belief in Shakespeare's genius.

In the Essex trials, where the play of *Richard II.* was a part of the indictment (probably drawn by Bacon), I have shown that Bacon, if he had written the play, could not have appeared as prosecutor without, at least, a guarantee of Shakespeare's silence (page 166). I might have inserted there, as a singularly pertinent answer to such a supposition, a verse from *As You Like It*, written about that time, which reads as though suggested by an aversion to the part that Bacon was acting:

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh,
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.

In the life-time of these two men, one, by the "sweetness of his nature" and his "uprightness of dealing," won the love of his friends and fellows, while the other, by his "coldness of heart and meanness of spirit," drew upon himself universal contempt and hatred. Now, after three centuries, a number of people appear who seem to delight in defaming the former and lauding the latter. They invent situations, invest historical characters with prejudices contrary to the facts, and one of them has quite outstripped all the others by constructing an arithmetical vagary, crazy enough to set bedlam in ecstasy, in order to show Bacon's genius and inclination to have been what every fact in his life naturally and logically disproves. They betray a marked neglect of simple inconsistencies and the tests of ordinary probability. According to the usual mode of reasoning, until these are examined the argument cannot properly advance to the consideration of mechanical impossibilities born of mental idiosyncrasy, of imaginary hidden meanings and aimless mysterious motives. But by whatever extraordinary devices they strive to influence opinion, in so far as their efforts invite a study of Bacon the friends of Shakespeare should wish them all success, for in that the most effective refutation of the Baconites' claims will be found.

PHILADELPHIA, *March*, 1888.

CHAPTER I.

Bacon's pride in his writings, and their competency as testimony—General ignorance concerning him and his works—His 104th Psalm—His biographers' opinions of his attempts at versification—His manuscript—The cipher—The churlish priest.

IF Lord Bacon could have foreseen that a dispute would arise at some future time concerning him, and especially as an author, he would have been perfectly satisfied to have his writings speak for him, for no one ever dwelt with more satisfaction than he on one's own literary productions.

His writings are pervaded with a tone of self-satisfaction, or even felicitation, that betrays his belief that they shall be an enduring monument to his greatness of mind and his work; indeed, he admits this to be his ambition.

His introduction to one of his works has this heading:

“FRANCIS OF VERULAM'S GREAT INSTAURATION.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AUTHOR.

“Francis of Verulam thought thus, and such is the method which he determined within himself, and which he thought it concerned the living and posterity to know.”

He nowhere conceals his concern as to the place he shall occupy in history, or his anxiety as to how poster-

ity shall judge him, and to secure for himself the fame that he so earnestly desired he spent untold time and labor upon the works that have been issued in his name. His *Novum Organum* was revised and copied twelve times before he gave it to the public, and he is said to have had it under reflection for forty years.

Some idea may be formed of the value he placed upon his works and his solicitude for their preservation from the following paragraph, written by Joseph Devay, M.A., in his introduction to Bacon's works: "The fate of Chaucer haunted him. He thought that modern languages would play the bankrupt with books; and if he did not enshrine his thoughts in a dead language, his name would never travel abroad, and would positively die out among his own countrymen in the next generation. With the assistance of Herbert, Playfair, and some add Ben Jonson, he gave his new treatise, together with his essays and many of his minor pieces, a Latin dress; but on contrasting those works with the *Novum Organum*, originally written by him in Latin, it does not appear that he was much indebted to the attainments of his translators."

Macaulay says of him, "In his will he expressed with singular brevity, energy and pathos a mournful consciousness that his actions had not been such as to entitle him to the esteem of those under whose observation his life had been passed, and at the same time a proud confidence that his writings had secured for him a high and permanent place among the benefactors of mankind."

The high estimate that he placed upon his writings

and the care with which he prepared them make them most competent testimony for him in a matter of literary comparison. They go further than that. They define his character, taste and opinions with such emphasis, repetition and uniformity as to mark his attitude distinctly toward every phase of the Shakespeare controversy.

What "Francis of Verulam thought" (and what it now seems to "concern posterity to know") of the *stage*, of *fiction* and of *works of imagination* is expressed in so pronounced a manner in his writings as to leave no doubt as to his judgment upon this pertinent point of the present inquiry.

The fame that admirers of Bacon are trying to secure for him is not only very different from, but quite opposite to, the kind of reputation that he tried to establish for himself; and if many of the people who allow themselves to doubt Shakespeare's authorship, because "so little is known of him," will examine their own knowledge, they will discover, I think, that they know fully as much about him as about Bacon.

Bacon's fame rests chiefly upon what somebody else knows of him. His books have been relegated to remote places in libraries, and the general idea of what they contain is largely supposition. He is supposed to have written a large number of moral essays, and to have discovered a new system of physics, both of which ideas are only partly true. His scientific work contains grave and fundamental errors. King James, to whom it was dedicated, said of it, "It is like the peace of God, that passeth understanding;" and it is not going

too far to say that some of his essays are contemptible. In support of which assertion I will produce a number in the course of this article.

Hume says of him, "Most of his performances were composed in Latin; though he possessed neither the elegance of that nor his native tongue. If we consider him merely as an author and philosopher, the light in which we view him at present, though very estimable, he was yet inferior to his contemporary Galilæo, perhaps even to Kepler. Bacon pointed out at a distance the road to true philosophy; Galilæo pointed it out to others, and made, himself, considerable advances in it. The Englishman was ignorant of geometry; the Florentine revived that science, excelled in it, and was the first that applied it, together with experiment, to natural philosophy. The former rejected, with the most positive disdain, the system of Copernicus; the latter fortified it with new proofs, derived both from reason and the senses. Bacon's style is stiff and rigid. His wit, though often brilliant, is also often unnatural and far fetched, and he seems to be the original of those pointed similes and long-spun allegories which so much distinguish the English authors."

His reputation exists now upon a preconceived idea of his mind, taste and character. He retains an erroneous place in the estimation of the public generally from being so little read. This is the case to that extent that one finds numbers of people who readily admit that they know little or nothing of him themselves, that they have not read his books; yet they are willing to admit the probability of his having written

Shakespeare's marvellous works, simply from a vague impression of the universal nature of his acquirements.

I have thought that perhaps this easy admission of what seems to me to be without a single fact or probability to support it might be owing to a belief that the voluminous character of his writings makes it difficult to decide, without great labor, as to his poetic and dramatic talent. This is certainly an error. His metaphysical and legal works are entirely irrelevant to this subject except as showing the nature of the study to which he devoted himself. His speculative works are not at all bulky, and are too positive to permit more than one interpretation of his attitude toward the stage and the drama. His faith in himself is too firm to allow any doubts to enter his mind in regard to the subjects which concern this inquiry; consequently his opinions are expressed in a manner not easily misunderstood. To discover what manner of man he was does not require much speculation, analysis or sharpness of intellect; for one can judge, with far greater confidence, the probabilities and possibilities of a nature that is fixed, dogmatic and matter-of-fact than of a tolerant, imaginative and subtle mind and disposition. Also in addition to his own writings we have the opinions of his historians, who are critics very partial to him; and history furnishes facts in his political career that have an important bearing upon his relation to the plays.

Bacon never wrote any poetry; at least he published none; and this suggests some pertinent inquiries. For instance, granting him Shakespeare's genius, why should he confine himself to writing plays? It is quite nat-

ural that Shakespeare should do so, for he was an actor and the stage was his profession and livelihood. Bacon had no such interest. If a prejudice existed against play writing, there was certainly none against such verses as those of Spenser, Sydney, Raleigh, Milton and a hundred others. Yet there is nowhere as much as a stray fragment of such poetry among his manuscripts. The theory of his champions supposes that he never wrote the things which he might safely acknowledge, but that he schemed and labored exclusively to produce only such works as would jeopard his reputation and position. It cannot be conceived that he would have felt no pride in his art, or that he would not have been recognized by the poets of his time, or that he would not have contributed largely to the verse of that age had he possessed such talent; and it cannot be believed that he would have devoted such genius to any one field to the total exclusion of everything else, especially to a calling that he considered "corrupt and disreputable," and which could bring him little if any profit, and might do him much mischief, if his friends' views are correct. It is frequently urged by Shakespeare's friends that he could not have secured and maintained the respect and love of his fellows and patrons if he had not been capable of writing the plays which he produced. It is fully as pertinent to point out that Bacon could not have concealed such talent from the wits of the age had he possessed it.

Again, why should Bacon's muse expire when Shakespeare left the stage? He lived fifteen years after that, but there were no more such plays or productions. If

Shakespeare had only been a mask for him, his absence would merely have necessitated another disguise; and as Ben Jonson outlived Bacon eleven years and was his intimate friend and eulogist, he might have been a most opportune substitute for Shakespeare. Bacon did write some verses, or, at least, he put some psalms into rhyme; but there is nothing in this feat that contradicts the assertion that he wrote no poetry. I think there are eight of these versifications, and I will copy the 104th Psalm, which is the longest:

“ Father and King of powers, both high and low,
 Whose sounding fame all creatures serve to blow;
 My soul shall with the rest strike up thy praise,
 And carol of thy works and wondrous ways.
 But who can blaze thy beauties, Lord, aright?
 They turn the brittle beams of mortal sight.
 Upon thy head thou wearest a glorious crown
 All set with virtues, polished with renown:
 Then round about a silver veil doth fall
 Of crystal light, mother of colors all.
 The compass heaven, smooth without grain or fold,
 All set with spangs of glittering stars untold,
 And striped with golden beam of power unpent,
 Is raised up for a removing tent.
 Vaulted and arched are his chamber beams
 Upon the seas, the waters, and the streams:
 The clouds as chariots swift do scour the sky;
 The stormy winds upon their wings do fly.
 His angels spirits are that wait his will,
 As flames of fire his anger they fulfill.
 In the beginning, with mighty hand,
 He made the earth by counterpoise to stand,
 Never to move, but to be fixed still;
 Yet hath no pillars but his sacred will.
 This earth, as with a veil, once covered was,

The waters overflowed all the mass :
But upon his rebuke away they fled,
And then the hills began to show their head ;
The vales their hollow bosoms opened plain,
The streams ran trembling down the vales again ;
And that the earth no more might drowned be,
He set the sea his bounds of liberty ;
And though his waves resound, and beat the shore,
Yet it is bridled by his holy lore.
Then did the rivers seek their proper places,
And found their heads, their issues, and their races ;
The springs do feed the rivers all the way,
And so the tribute to the sea repay :
Running along through many a pleasant field,
Much fruitfulness unto the earth they yield ;
That know the beasts and cattle feeding by,
Which for to slake their thirst do thither hie.
Nay desert grounds the streams do not forsake,
But through the unknown ways their journeys take :
The asses wild that hide in wilderness
Do thither come, their thirst for to refresh.
The shady trees along their banks do spring
In which the birds do build, and sit, and sing ;
Stroking the gentle air with pleasant notes,
Plaining or chirping through their warbling throats.
The higher grounds, where waters cannot rise,
By rain and dews are watered from the skies ;
Causing the earth put forth the grass for beasts,
And garden herbs served at the greatest feasts ;
And bread, that is all viands' firmament,
And gives a firm and solid nourishment ;
And wine, man's spirits for to recreate ;
And oil, his face for to exhilarate.
The sappy cedars, tall like stately towers,
High-flying birds do harbor in their bowers :
The holy storks, that are the travellers,
Choose for to dwell and build within the firs ;

The climbing goats hang on steep mountain's side ;
The digging conies in the rocks do bide.
The moon, so constant in inconstancy,
Doth rule the seasons orderly ;
The sun, the eye of the world, doth know his race,
And when to show and when to hide his face.
Thou makest darkness that it may be night
When the savage beasts that fly the light
(As conscious of man's hatred) leave their den,
And range abroad secured frōm sight of men.
Then do the forests ring of lions roaring
That ask their meat of God, their strength restoring ;
But when the day appears, they back do fly,
And in their dens again do lurking lie.
The rolling seas unto the lot doth fall
Of beasts innumerable, both great and small.
The fishes there far voyages do make ;
To divers shores their journey they do take.
All these do ask of thee their meat to live
Which in due season thou dost give.
All life and spirit from thy breath proceed,
Thy word doth all things generate and feed ;
If thou withdrawest it, then they cease to be,
And straight return to dust and vanity.
The earth shall quake if aught his wrath provoke ;
Let him but touch the mountains, they shall smoke.
As long as life doth last I hymns will sing
With cheerful voice to the eternal King.
I know that he my words will not despise,
Thanksgiving is to him a sacrifice.
But as for sinners, they shall be destroyed
From off the earth ; their places shall be void.
Let all his works praise him with one accord ;
Oh, praise the Lord, my soul ; praise ye the Lord !"

These rhymes were not written in Bacon's youth, but two years before his death, and eight years after Shake-

sppeare died. He dedicated them to his friend Herbert, and published them. They are of particular importance as evidence of his talent for versification on account of being written so late in his life. They were published about the time that Heminge and Condell were publishing the folio edition of 1623, under difficulties so well known, when the *real* author of the plays could have rendered such inestimable service. The plays had then been in existence many years, some at least thirty, none less than twelve; the sonnets thirty years, and Lucrece nearly as long. Therefore, to believe Bacon the author of the plays is to suppose, not that he was an unskilled versifier when he wrote the psalms, but that the author of these rhymes was the ripe and unequalled poet, the veteran who had already given Shakespeare's works to the world.

Spedding of Trinity College is one of Bacon's most partial historians, and it is interesting to know what he, as one of Bacon's friendliest critics, thinks of his ability in this department of literature:—"The translation of certain psalms into English verse are the only verses certainly of Bacon's making that have come down to us, and probably with one or two exceptions are the only verses he ever attempted." This historian goes on then to say that he has "watched Bacon's progress in versification," and that the "effect of the two first experiments is flat enough," but as he advances, "although there is an inevitable loss of lyric fire and force, this is compensated by the development of meanings," etc. Again he says: "In compositions upon which a man would have thought it a culpable waste of time to bestow

any serious labor, it would be idle to seek either for indications of his taste or for a measure of his powers."

And again: "Of these verses of Bacon's it has been usual to speak not only as a failure, but as a ridiculous failure: a censure in which I cannot concur. An unpracticed versifier, who will not take time and trouble about the work, must of course leave many bad verses; for poetic feeling and imagination, though they will dislike a wrong word, will not of themselves suggest a right one that will suit metre and rhyme; and it would be easy to quote from the few pages, not only many bad lines, but many poor stanzas."

I have copied what Bacon's historians say of his half dozen attempts at versification, because I wish to draw attention to the fact that the men who had such abundant opportunity to discover the nature of his life's work speak of his few experiments in rhyme at the age of sixty—upwards—as a new form of mental activity. These men had made it the business of many years to learn everything concerning Bacon's life. They had searched every place and studied every piece of writing to discover and preserve any and everything that could throw light upon his character and genius; and yet there is no hint of a suspicion that any rumor or report had ever reached them that he might be Shakespeare in disguise. If they overlooked anything that could establish Bacon's right to Shakespeare's genius, then what they missed was infinitely more than that which they found.

A singular feature in this discussion is that Bacon's biographers, who had access to his manuscripts, memorandums, letters, and the private recesses of his library,

are not among those who connect him with Shakespeare. This is because the claim is not made upon evidence, but is simply a belief in Bacon founded upon a disbelief in Shakespeare. Bacon's biographers do not share this belief or disbelief. Mr. Devey, for instance, says, "In casting the horoscope of the future, or tracing, with certain hand, the progress of civilization, who shall account for the appearance of such men as Dante and Shakespeare, who have created a new language; of Cromwell and Luther, who have revolutionized empires; of Newton and Archimedes, who have introduced a new element into science?"

It is no obstacle to the belief of Bacon's friends that the plays are the work of an average lifetime, that they were put upon the stage by Shakespeare, and that Bacon's biographers (and his brother to whom his manuscripts were bequeathed) found no scrap or hint of an incident to indicate or betray the accomplishment of such an immense work and involving the agency of at least one other person.

His historians say he considered even the versification of the psalms a "culpable waste of time;" yet one "great student" (at least) is not influenced by such testimony, and he is said to have accumulated tons of evidence to prove not only that he wrote plays greater in volume than his scientific works, but that he had the time, patience and ingenuity to insert an arithmetical device in them to attest his authorship.

It would not be any more incongruous to suppose Beethoven running a drum movement containing some occult alphabetical trade-mark through his symphonies,

than to think such compositions could be accompanied by anything so cheap and mechanical.

This "great student" has undertaken the task of adding even more than Shakespeare to Bacon, for his theory ascribes to Bacon also the divination to foresee that a man would appear who could and would work out his puzzle. The enigma, of course, would be of no use unless some one could solve it, and might easily defeat its own object. Considering how many easier and common-sense ways might be devised to disclose a posthumous secret, the choice of such an uncertain and extraordinary one needs explanation, and this perhaps is furnished by the assumption of Bacon's faith in the zeal and cleverness of one for centuries yet unborn.

The Trinity College historians were great admirers of Bacon. Their account of him says he had the "natural faculties a poet wants: a fine ear for metre, a fine feeling for imaginative effect in words, and a vein of poetic passion," and that he was "not without fine frenzy." Here then is a voluntary admission by a most indulgent and partial critic, that Bacon was usually considered a ridiculous failure as a versifier, followed by an apology for his lack of success at poetry, on the ground of a want of practice and a lack of interest. I have said the plays had then been in existence many years, but they existed in such an uncared-for shape that the attention of some one capable of appreciating their worth and putting them in their original form would doubtless have given them to us more complete and beautiful in many parts than we have them. As Bacon did nothing toward their preservation or pub-

lication (in such strong contrast with his solicitude for *his* writings), his indifference about them or ignorance of them cannot be reconciled with any claim to their authorship; and it seems as though his friends were willing to commit him to any absurdity when they picture him concocting a scheme to insure himself the fame in the future of having written the plays, while quite unconcerned what becomes of them in the present; especially as he had so little faith in the survival of the language in which the plays were written, that he had taken the precaution to put *his* works into a dead tongue to insure their perpetuity.

It is not speculation, however, but fact, that at the time Heminge and Condell were collecting and publishing Shakespeare's plays, Bacon wrote the psalms. His historians did not think them very bad or without poetic passion, notwithstanding their "bad lines" and "flat effects;" but the thought of their having been written by the *real* Shakespeare probably never occurred to them.

These lines should be very disheartening to any one looking for similarities between Shakespeare and Bacon; for instance:

"Causing the earth put forth the grass for beasts,
And garden herbs, served at the greatest feasts,
And bread, that is all viands' firmament,
And gives a firm and solid nourishment,
And wine, man's spirits for to recreate,
And oil, his face for to exhilarate."

Of course he did not compose the sentiment; it seems to me that he has hardly preserved it. It does not

suggest the bounty of nature as much as the meal-time of the living creatures.

A "firmament of bread," the "hollow bosoms of the vales," the "lions roaring to God for their meat," are not pleasant fancies.

"The earth shall quake if aught his wrath provoke;
Let him but touch the mountains, they shall smoke."

It is only necessary to compare Bacon's uncouth versification with the original psalm, to see that he has destroyed its sublimity and spirituality and has only preserved its material sense, if he has not travestied it.

"The compass heaven, smooth without grain or fold,
All set with spangs of glittering stars untold,
And striped with golden beams of power unpent,
Is raised up for a removing tent.

* * * * *

The moon, so constant in inconstancy,
Doth rule the seasons orderly;
The sun, the eye of the world, doth know his race,
And when to show and when to hide his face.
Thou makest darkness that it may be night
When the savage beasts that fly the light
(As conscious of man's hatred) leave their den,
And range abroad secured from sight of men.
Then do the forests ring of lions roaring
That ask their meat of God, their strength restoring;
But when the day appears they back do fly,
And in their dens again do lurking lie."

The thing of first importance in the introduction of the Baconite theory is to prove that Bacon never wrote this psalm. While these lines exist as his production

they must be accepted as the gauge of his ability, and that is fatal to the claim that is made for him. They are witnesses that must be silenced. They could not be inserted in any Shakespeare piece and escape detection by a school-boy. They compare unfavorably with anything in print of that age. Those who think that Shakespeare needed Bacon's learning to enable him to write the plays may judge from this versification how much Bacon's learning contributed to his poetry.

The use of the words "do" and "for to" may be intended as very stately and formal, and at that time *perhaps* may not have been considered so inelegant as now; but the repetition, line after line, of such unvaried terms exposes a dearth of fancy, imagination and taste, and is most tiresome and unpleasing. In the selections from a hundred different poets and ballad-writers which I have seen collected in one volume, from 1400 to 1626, the year of Bacon's death, there is not anything that is not infinitely superior to Bacon's verses, which I think have never received the compliment of being printed in any collection of poems, or, so far as I know, have never appeared outside of his own works or in any book or article on this subject, and I doubt if many people know they exist.

His lines not only prove that he was not a poet, but they show that he had not sufficient sentiment to teach him that they were weak and trashy and should have been burned, not published. He ought to have hidden them from his valet or chambermaid. It is impossible to imagine the author of these lines rising to the genius of the plays, or the author of the plays falling to the

level of such verse. In all of Bacon's writings upon this subject it will be seen that he robs it of "fair ornament" and reveals only its "grossness;" and in this also he presents as opposite a character to Shakespeare as does the churlish priest to Laertes.

P.—She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.

L.—Lay her i' the earth;
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be
When thou liest howling."

A like rebuke to a priest or condemnation of a church ordinance is contrary to every utterance of Bacon, and he would never have written:

Bass.—The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?"

There is a depth of earnestness, or, indeed, of indignant protest, in these lines that could never emanate from a courtier, time-server or politician, or any one not moved and incensed by the knowledge and injustice of the thing described.

CHAPTER II.

Repugnance to the Baconites' claim—Queen Elizabeth's estimate of Bacon—His doubt of the permanency of the English language—His quotations—His opinion of stage acting—His Essay on Masques and Triumphs—Ben Jonson's description of Shakespeare's strolling company.

AMONG the lovers of Shakespeare, I think there is a repugnance to the thought of attributing the authorship to Bacon, that would not be felt to nearly the same degree if the claim were made for any one of a half dozen others; for instance, Marlowe, Decker and Fletcher. These men were Shakespeare's friends. The stage was their livelihood. Their hearts were in this art. They loved and honored their profession. They had great dramatic talent, and one's heart warms to them for their comradeship with Shakespeare and willingly accords them some of the glory.

But Bacon's inferiority in everything that constitutes Shakespeare's charm, his expressed contempt for the stage, and the mean motive upon which his claim to Shakespeare's works is based (*viz.*, that from sheer cupidity he disowned his work), stirs up a feeling of protest, as though the plays themselves were threatened with some loss or injury.

The lovers of the plays demand that they shall have an honest origin and a manly author, and will not believe that they could have been written in fear and shame, sneaked out of a back door and imposed upon

the wittiest and brightest people of that age. Considering the undisputed place that is given them, it is natural that any question of their authorship should awaken a deep interest; but it is singular that any one should be willing to dethrone the man who positively put them on the stage, and whose claim to them was absolutely unquestioned during his lifetime and for more than two centuries after his death, without, at least, a most searching test of the right of the new claimant. It is singular also that people should so passively echo the refrain of the doubters as to the college-bred requirements of their author. The most beautiful parts in Shakespeare are in the simplest language, and there is nothing in the plays that the genius that produced the verse could not have learned from reading. The one essential that learning and study could not supply was the mind and genius that was born in Shakespeare.

But the intellectual feature of the subject is not the only one; the character, taste and employments of the two men are almost as much a part of it as the question of their learning and literary ability.

It may be urged that Bacon's writings are in accord with the philosophy of the plays, even if his character was not, and therefore that his career cannot be cited against him as their author. It is my conviction that this is not true, and that his writings plainly teach the methods by which he lived; that his rules of life, his ambition, tastes, principles and prejudices, were totally antagonistic to the spirit of the plays, not artistically alone, but in all the truth that they affirm and all the

wrong that they expose. This I shall hereafter endeavor to demonstrate by his own expressions.

It is impossible to doubt Shakespeare's sincerity. Each one unconsciously and irresistibly forms an idea of an author, justifying or rejecting what he conveys to the imagination of each; and thus to the lovers of Shakespeare the incomparable poet is a lovable man, full of nobility and manhood, and cannot be the corrupt judge and servile politician.

It is singular that Bacon's learning should give him any eligibility to dramatic genius. He was a great student and a ready, voluble lawyer. He was well read in everything extant at that time. He had, above everything else, a remarkable memory, but, in my judgment, limited originality except for law and physics, and his extreme love for these indicates the absence of qualities which belong to the poet or dramatist.

If I have ventured very far in doubting his more than ordinary originality, I have very distinguished authority of his own time to sustain my disbelief; one indeed who knew him intimately, and one to whom he gave a new year's gift, 1599-1600, described as follows: "By Mr. Frauncis Bacon, one pettyccete of white saten, embrothered all over like feathers and billets, with three brode borders, faire embrothered with snakes and frutage:" no other than Queen Elizabeth herself, who said of him, "Bacon hath great wit and learning, but in law he showeth to the uttermost of his knowledge, and is not deep."

The gift of the dress shows that Bacon had "wit" enough to know the accessible side of the queen. I

have read that she issued a proclamation to restrain the growing extravagance of her subjects in matters of apparel, but that she herself appeared almost every day in a different habit, and was so fond of her clothes that she would not part with them; and when she died there were in her wardrobe three thousand dresses that she had worn during her lifetime.

It is reasonable to suppose that if Bacon had written the plays they would have been translated into Latin, as his published works were. I think there is nothing over his signature, except his letters, that have not at least a Latin title. While he was so unappreciative of the English language, and held it so cheaply, that he would not entrust his writings to it, Shakespeare was discovering and creating a depth of power, expression, feeling and beauty in it that alone would make it immortal. It is a very strong side-light upon the improbability of Bacon's hand in these writings, that they are the masterpieces of a language that he valued so lightly. To him a dead tongue was more than the language in which the plays were written.

Another feature that is very prominent in Bacon's writings, and which is also in striking contrast with Shakespeare, is his monumental habit of quotation, allusion, illustration and reference to other writings, occasions and incidents. It is boundless. It gives evidence of most extensive reading and phenomenal memory. He had a habit of jotting down whatever caught his attention, both in his reading and in occurrences. He could not, however, have used notes simply, with such facility. He must have had a memory quick and

ready, and one that could always be depended on. His writings unprofessional are brimful of such instances. Every page and almost every paragraph contains them. It is the scaffolding upon which he supports all his speculative theories, and is (I think) by far the most interesting and substantial part of the structure. His works are so full of this kind of padding, borrowed from every conceivable source, that they would not hold together without it. They would be "very rags." This habit of illustration by analogy drawn from such a vast range of subjects, which embellished his pages and at the same time displayed his learning, was not only a necessity to him, but it was his undisguised pride. He says, in *Advancement of Learning*, "The way of delivery by aphorisms has numerous advantages over the methodical. First, it gives us a proof of the author's abilities, and shows whether he hath entered deep into his subject or not." One who has a happy faculty of using others' thoughts makes them half his own. Bacon fully appreciated that. The foreign matter that he crammed into his *Essays* was the pith of them. In them he never stood alone. He used everything he could capture to extend his articles, even if he had to strain the life and shape out of it as his witness. He certainly possessed this faculty to an uncommon extent, and it was a valuable help to him, but it is just the *opposite* of *originality*. Although he used so much that was not his own and may have made it serve his purposes then, it does not bear criticism now. His nature was so material that he could scarcely comprehend the spiritual and moral in any true sense; and

much that he quoted he distorted into meanings contrary to its original intention, as I shall endeavor to show.

Yet his habitual citing of instances to support his theories and gain his ends exhibited him at his best and gave him great power and renown.

I have emphasized this habit of straining after supports to show how different it is from Shakespeare. Mr. Fred. Gard Fleay, in his *Life of Shakespeare*, page 75, says, "For Marlowe he had a sincere regard; from his poem of *Hero and Leander*, *Shakespeare makes the only direct quotation to be found in his plays*; on his (Marlowe's) historical plays Shakespeare, after his friend's decease, bestowed in addition, revision and completion a greater amount of minute work than on his own."

If I were candidly trying to convince myself that Bacon wrote the plays, I should feel it essential to my belief that some probable reason should be found to explain this dissimilarity, which is so distinct and which exposes such measureless inequality in the writings. It is only necessary to read Bacon, especially his speculative works, to see that it does exist, not simply to some degree but absolutely. In Bacon the quotations are the prominent feature which immediately catch the attention. I have found as many as fourteen on one page. In Shakespeare we feel that such an instance could hardly fail to disturb the harmony and mar the purity of the perfect work. Shakespeare could only have borrowed from those poorer than himself.

Such an unlikeness in the writings of the same

author, in this particular alone, is hardly possible even with the most studied care and intention ; but conceding that possibility, the motive is still wanting. The least that such an argument could assume would be that Bacon had bestowed great care upon the plays, and had felt a fondness for the work. Both of these assumptions, however, are contradicted by Bacon's own testimony and by all the facts. He never claimed the plays, and did nothing toward preserving and publishing them, and he wrote most contemptuously of the stage.

I think the contrast between them in this respect is not explainable upon any supposition that one brain produced Shakespeare's plays and Bacon's works. It is not possible that Bacon could have completely dropped the habit which is so conspicuous in all his writings, had he wished to ; and it is equally unreasonable to suppose a desire on his part to avoid an art in which he excelled, and of which he was evidently very vain. I do not think he could have written anything on ethics without such prompting and suggestion ; indeed, I think it was his memory rather than his mind that did most of his writing. It is not possible that Bacon could have been as superior to himself as Shakespeare is superior to Bacon's known works ; and it is not possible that Bacon could have had the genius and power to write the Shakespeare plays, and have been considered "not deep" by a woman of Queen Elizabeth's penetration. She also made great pretension to learning ; wrote and translated books, and made ready replies in Greek and Latin.

Bacon was in all things antagonistic to Shakespeare's

genius and theories. He has furnished evidence at every point that he was not the author of the plays. He had no love for the theatre, but regarded it with great disfavor and wrote most disparagingly of it. In one place he says, "Though the thing itself be disreputable in the profession of it, yet it is excellent as a discipline; we mean the action of the theatre." Again, "Dramatic poetry, which has the theatre for its world, would be of excellent use if it were sound; for the discipline and corruption of the theatre is of very great consequence. Now, of this corruption we have enough. Modern play acting is but a toy except when it is too biting and satirical, but the ancients used it as a means of educating men's minds to virtue; and certain it is, though a great secret in nature, that men's minds in company are more open to affections and impressions than when alone."

Again he gives his pedantic estimate of its proper purpose and use in language so far removed from any sign of interest in or enjoyment of it, that this paragraph alone should deny him any claim to dramatic sense or feeling.

He writes: "I mean stage playing; an act which strengthens the memory, regulates the tone and effect of the voice and pronunciation, teaches a decent carriage of the countenance and gesture, gives not a little assurance, and accustoms young men to bear being looked at."

That is Bacon's summing up of the utility of stage acting. It was a "thing," and was disreputable as a profession. Modern theatres were a corruption of which

they had enough ; and acting in Shakespear's time was a toy except when it became too much of a satire.

The only excuse for its existence was the use the ancients had made of it. The first tragedy written in the English language was performed during Queen Elizabeth's reign. Up to a short time previous to this, only scriptural plays had been given. Bacon evidently referred to that kind of stage acting as the sound use to which the ancients had devoted the stage. He wanted it to preach a sermon ; and as it did not do that, the only good that he could find in it was as a school of elocution. It strengthened the memory—of course committing the roles would catch his matter-of-fact attention—and he could appreciate the benefit to the memory.

At that time Shakespeare's plays were not only new but it was a new epoch for the stage. Bacon's Ancients had departed, and in their place appeared the genius, poetry and humor of living men to "hold the mirror up to nature." One can only try to imagine the wonder, surprise and joy of the audiences. Even now, when we have seen and read the plays until we know them almost as well as the actors, they still possess us to the extent that disillusion is never welcome. Then what a niggard comprehension of the drama must a man have had who after seeing Shakespeare's plays could write that the "thing" "play acting strengthens the memory," teaches young men to bear being looked at, is corrupt and not sound as it was with the ancients who used it to educate men's minds to virtue!

It is not of any consequence what Bacon's opinion of the stage was (there never lived a man of his stamp

that did not disapprove of it), except as to the bearing it has upon the subject of the authorship. At that time, when Shakespeare's plays were coming upon the stage, Bacon had no more appreciation of their incomparable beauty or sense of their marvellous dramatic merit than a sneer at the stage, which he dismissed with a few paragraphs of contemptuous drivel.

If he had ever written for the stage, he would not have bestowed so little attention upon it in his works, and certainly would not have stigmatized it as corrupt; neither would he have preferred the ancient stage if his own plays were being acted on the modern. If he had written plays, they would have been plays of the character he described, which the ancients used to perform. The kind of a play that Bacon might have written, and which would not have been a "toy" or "too biting," and which would have been "sound," is set forth in his *New Atlantis*, the only imaginative (?) story that he ever wrote of which I intend to speak.

If Bacon had produced the Shakespeare plays, he would have spoken of them as seen from the stage, and would not have been so unappreciative of their power as to attribute the effect of the acting to the "great secret in nature" that people are more affected in a body than singly. He was not the man to belittle his own work, and especially if he had any interest in its success. If he had remained entirely silent about the stage, his admirers might have discovered that to be a part of the scheme of concealment, as though he had avoided the subject intentionally; but the apparently careless manner in which he mentions the subject and

occasionally recurs to it, and so quickly disposes of it with such commonplace and superficial comments—all in perfect keeping with his grave and lofty “Francis of Verulam thought thus”—indicates that the subject did not interest him. One cannot imagine the writer of these plays indifferent about their appearance upon the stage, and it is not possible that a man could feel any interest in the stage and write of it as Bacon does.

The test of a play is its presentation on the stage. This is the thought to which the writer addresses himself. He has as defined an idea of all the details of the stage setting as about the plot and the sentiment. His characters are realities, who must play their parts as he conceives them, and therefore his business is not finished with his manuscript. There is, perhaps, nothing that expresses this as forcibly as a play within a play, as *Hamlet*, where he instructs the actors how they shall speak and what faults they shall avoid, and the “*Critic*,” in which the author is present at the rehearsals. That is the solicitude for the effect of the play. It is the fear that it may be marred in the acting. Aside from the desire to avoid faults common to the stage, an author has a taste and fancy about his work which he may fear the text does not fully convey.

Bacon’s expressions in regard to the stage taken in their most favorable light would denote a contemptuous unconcern. My belief is that he would have been an active enemy to the stage if the court had not protected it, and I shall show by his essay on *Masques and Triumphs* that he only tolerated such “toys” because “princes will have them.”

There was nothing in the theatre or in amusements that appealed to his nature. To him the theatre was frivolous. He was engaged in realities. That there could be instruction in anything but a discourse or essay, and particularly in anything as disreputable as the theatre, in his time, he probably never suspected.

If, however, the actors could have personated such characters as he has created (?) in the *New Atlantis*, where there is "no touch of love," and the women are not permitted to speak, with dialogues full of flattery of kings and princes, interspersed with homilies upon artificial virtue and soliloquies of crafty wisdom, then Bacon's plays might have been presented; but it would have been the death, and not the birth, of the drama.

In Bacon's time there was a kind of dramatic performance, called *Masques*, which was quite popular at court. The ladies and gentlemen of the court took part, and persons were hired to perform the inferior roles. It is said that Ben Jonson and the leading dramatists wrote for them, but *Shakespeare did not*. Bacon has written an essay upon these performances, which is similar to what I have quoted from his other writings. Indeed, I have never found an expression in his writings at variance with these opinions in regard to the theatre. Even in his *Novum Organum* he has created a department which he calls "idols of the theatre. True they have no reference to the stage, but the name of the theatre is applied to them as condemnatory. As he is writing of science, I think his inborn repugnance to the stage suggests to him the fit-

ness of the term theatre to describe that which is to him impure. He says, "The idols of the theatre are not innate, nor do they introduce themselves secretly into the understanding, but they are manifestly instilled and cherished by fictions of theories and depraved rules of demonstration." Again he says, "There are idols which have crept into men's minds from the various dogmas of peculiar systems of philosophy, and also from the perverted rules of demonstration, and these we denominate idols of the theatre; for we regard all the systems of philosophy hitherto received or imagined as so many plays brought out and performed, creating fictitious and theatrical worlds."

If Bacon had written plays, these masques would have furnished him an excellent opportunity to place one of his productions before the court, where it would not have been professional or disreputable, and where it would not have blighted his career or stabbed his reputation. Milton's *Comus* was such a production. He did not entitle it *Comus*, but simply "A Masque," and it was presented at Ludlow Castle in 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, President of Wales. Milton was eighteen years old at the time of Bacon's death. His political career shows that his dramatic genius was no obstacle to his advancement, and consequently there was no political obstacle to Bacon's appearing as a dramatic poet at these court masques.

In fact, dramatic writing would have lost him no esteem at court. It was not *writing*, but *acting*, that was disreputable; indeed, the court was friendly to the theatrical companies and interposed to protect them,

and contributed to their support on some occasions. I shall show this to have been conspicuously true. The people who opposed the theatre were not the party in power to whom Bacon looked for favors. It is probable that Bacon's prospects would have been improved rather than injured if he had been known as the author of the plays. Certainly Queen Elizabeth would have rated his mental gifts more highly. Ben Jonson was a writer and something of an actor, and was very popular among the nobility. He was a guest at Bacon's celebration of his sixtieth anniversary, and wrote some lines relative to the occasion. There is no evidence whatever to show that *writing* the plays would have caused any feeling, either in Queen Elizabeth or King James, adverse to Bacon's political ambition. They were both patrons of the stage, and particularly appreciative of Shakespeare's plays, as the number of performances at Christmas festivities verifies.

If Bacon had been a writer of plays, it is singular that he should not write a masque, particularly as he attended (at least) one and wrote an essay on it. Also, if Shakespeare had been his mask he certainly would have been conspicuous on such an occasion; but instead of that, Shakespeare does not write for or take any part in that kind of a hippodrome performance, and Bacon writes a critique upon them, noticing only the grosser parts.

"OF MASQUES AND TRIUMPHS.

"These things are but toys to come amongst such serious observations; but yet, since princes will have such things, it is better they should be graced with

elegancy than daubed with cost. Dancing to song is a thing of great state and pleasure. I understand it that the song be in quire placed aloft and accompanied with some broken music, and the ditty fitted to the device. Acting in song, especially in dialogues, hath an extreme good grace; I say acting, not dancing (for that is a mean and vulgar thing); and the voices of the dialogue would be strong and manly (a base and a tenor; no treble), and the ditty high and tragical, not nice and dainty. Several quires placed one over against another and taking the voice by catches, anthem-wise, give great pleasure. Turning dances into figure is a childish curiosity; and generally, let it be noted that those things which I here set down are such as do naturally take the sense, and not respect petty wonderments. It is true, the alterations of the scenes, so it be quietly and without noise, are things of great beauty and pleasure, for they feed and relieve the eye before it be full of the same object. Let the scenes abound with light, specially colored and varied; and let the masquers or any other that are to come down from the scene have some motions upon the scene itself before their coming down; for it draws the eye strangely, and makes it with great pleasure to desire to see that it cannot perfectly discern. Let the songs be loud and cheerful, and not chirpings or pulings; let the music likewise be sharp and loud, and well placed. The colors that show best by candlelight are white, carnation and a kind of seawater green; and ouches or spangs, as they are of no great cost, so they are of most glory. As for rich embroidery, it is lost and not discerned. Let the suits

of the masquers be graceful, and such as become the person when the visors are off; not after examples of known attires; Turks, soldiers, mariners, and the like. Let anti-masques not be long; they have been commonly of fools, satyrs, babboons, wild men, antics, beasts, sprites, witches, Ethiopes, pigmies, turquets, nymphs, rustics, Cupids, statues moving, and the like. As for angels, it is not comical enough to put them in anti-masques; and anything that is hideous, as devils, giants, is, on the other side, as unfit; but chiefly, let the music of them be recreative, and with some strange changes. Some sweet odors suddenly coming forth, without any drops falling, are, in such a company as there is steam and heat, things of great pleasure and refreshment. Double masques, one of men, another of ladies, addeth state and variety; but all is nothing, except the room be kept clean and neat. For jousts and tourneys, and barriers, the glories of them are chiefly in the chariots wherein the challengers make their entry, especially if they be drawn with strange beasts. But enough of these toys."

That is as near a dramatic critique as anything to be found in Bacon's writings. It sounds as if he were talking of something that he felt no interest in and that he knew but little about. It is impossible to imagine the writer of that article plotting with Shakespeare to aid him in concealing his brilliancy and save him from the unhappy results of an exposure of his dramatic genius. And yet this is the theory upon which his claim is built.

This essay is faithful to his habitual temper. He

commences by calling the masques "toys" and finishes with the same epithet. It begins with an apology and ends with a shrug. He murmurs at the necessity of interrupting such serious observations as his studies, but yields because "princes will have such things." He shows that he has no knowledge of what he is saying, by flatly contradicting himself at the start, as, "dancing to song is a thing of great state and pleasure," and immediately afterwards, "it is a mean and vulgar thing." How a "stately" dance can be a great pleasure I do not know, but that is the adjective that describes everything that Bacon approves. There is no thought or mention of sentiment. He sees it only as a noisy spectacle and commends the "dumb show and noise." Every material part is noticed. The story of the dialogue is not. The things which catch his attention are the "strong and manly voice," the loud and tragical ditty, the sharp, loud music, scenery, light and costumes. The figures of the dance ruffle his stately muse: they are but "childish curiosity." He will not have a ditty that is "nice and dainty." He suggests the infusion of perfumes, for obvious reasons—does not want the company sprinkled, however—and thinks it all amounts to nothing unless the room be clean and neat.

Contrast his loud and tragical ditty with

*"Oberon.—Through this house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire;
Every elf, and fairy sprite,
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing and dance it trippingly."*

Comment cannot heighten the contrast between the light, elfish and fairy grace of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and this lumpish critique upon *Masques and Triumphs*. Everything in Bacon suggests its opposite in Shakespeare, and not its counterpart. Even the mention of the neat, clean room as essential to the success of the masque recalls a sentence from Ben Jonson, which gives a speaking picture of a travelling detachment of Shakespeare's company in contrast with the orderly requisites indispensable to Bacon's enjoyment (?) of theatricals.

This sentence is quoted in Fleay's life of Shakespeare. Shakespeare's company was journeying through the country, and Jonson published a dialogue in the *Poetaster*, in which he sought to make it appear that their necessity to travel was due to the inefficiency of their play writers, and (referring to Shakespeare's company) he puts this speech in the dialogue: "If thou wilt employ Marston, who pens high lofty, in a new stalking strain, thou shalt not need to travel with thy pumps full of gravel after a blind jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boards and barrel heads, to an old cracked trumpet."

Ben Jonson was connected with a rival theatre. The picture which he draws of Shakespeare's company may be somewhat exaggerated; but there is abundant other evidence of the same nature to show that the theatrical profession offered no temptation to Bacon to embark in it with a view to money making. It describes a condition in every respect totally uncongenial to him, and heightens the improbability of a pecuniary object in play writing.

Jonson's fling at Shakespeare, as the writer for his company, not only reveals the precarious fortunes of the actors, but also exposes the circumstances under which the plays were performed, in contrast with the neat and orderly requirements which Bacon laid so much stress upon. It is a very graphic picture of a strolling company. It suggests scanty receipts, a sorry equipment, cold meats, a thin orchestra, the roughest improvisation of a stage, and any chance building for a theatre or shelter; but I think it safe to assume that the rustics who filled the barns where the supposed "blind jade" was also quartered had a treat that was not disturbed by the perfumes or want of perfumes, and the audience that would flock to-day to see the player who "stalked" upon the stage with "barrel head" underpinnings would not be as critical about the surroundings as Bacon. These extracts defining Bacon's attitude toward the stage are as positive as he could easily make them. They express both indifference and aversion. They are his carefully-prepared thoughts: not what his historians say of him simply, but what he has written and scattered all through his works, and translated into classic language that it may endure to his renown.

The slighting manner in which he treats the subject is simply in harmony with his estimate of the place the stage merited in comparison with the questions worthy of his thought. Even as a pastime for the court, he felt it a compromise with his dignity to suspend his "serious observations" to notice it. In this essay he does not leave it to be inferred that he has no taste for

the lighter and finer parts of the masques, but calls attention that he has noticed the things which "do naturally take the sense and not respect petty wonderments."

CHAPTER III.

The stage as a symbol—Shakespeare—Bacon—Bacon's Notes on Conversation—Bacon's apparatus of rhetoric—The epitaph—Bacon's tomb—Bacon as an inquisitor—The quality of mercy—Earl of Southampton—Bacon's grants of patents to monopolies—Macaulay's estimate of Bacon's character—His servility to Buckingham—His pamphlet in favor of religious war—His falsification of history—Fairness of authorities quoted.

INSTEAD of a likeness in the writings of Shakespeare and Bacon, I find passages that are so pointedly dissimilar as to appear personal; for instance: Bacon says modern play acting is a "toy," is "corrupt" and "unsound," but the "ancients used it to educate men's minds to virtue." Shakespeare says, "playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

The use of the stage as a symbol, as it frequently occurs in Shakespeare, suggests the work of an actor and one whose mind dwells strongly upon his profession. The "seven ages" could never have been the thought

of a man who uses the stage as an illustration of that which is depraved and false. Bacon, in his Aphorisms, describes "perverted rules of demonstration as so many plays brought out and performed creating fictitious and theatrical worlds."

To Bacon the stage was a prompt and suitable illustration of what was false, fictitious and unreal. In Shakespeare's mind it embraced "all the world," and proclaimed the nobility of his art.

"Life is a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale,
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms:
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school: And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow: Then a soldier;
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth: And then the justice;
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part: The sixth age shifts

Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound: Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

"I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano:
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one."

These lines evince a familiarity with the stage and a fondness for it that cannot be supposed of Bacon. His regrets were for the *past*. Shakespeare's belief was in the *future*, and the future has justified him. One who would cavil at the degeneracy of the stage would hardly choose it as a symbol of life and its "strange eventful history."

Bacon was as short-sighted a seer of the future of the stage and its influence, as of the vitality and power of the English language. He chose a tongue that was passing out of use to "enshrine" his thoughts that they should not perish, and was so wide the mark that he needed to be translated to be read by his own countrymen. While supposing that he was going forward he was in reality faced toward the past, and he chose the stage as a symbol for the systems of philosophy which he disowned and condemned.

The character of the writings of the two men is so unlike that it is difficult to find instances where they have treated precisely the same subject. Some examples may be found, however, approaching nearly enough to

the same theme to afford a fair opportunity for comparison. Bacon's *Short Notes on Civil Conversations*, for instance, is addressed in some respects to the same school as Hamlet's advice to the players. He did not intend it for the theatre, it is true, but in its scope and purpose it is intended to cover the same general ground.

"SHORT NOTES ON CIVIL CONVERSATIONS.

"To deceive men's expectations generally (with cautel) argueth a staid mind and unexpected constancy, viz., in matters of fear, anger, sudden joy or grief, and all things which may affect or alter the mind in public or sudden accidents or such like.

"It is necessary to use a steadfast countenance, not waiving with action as in moving the head or hand too much, which showeth a fantastical, light and fickle operation of the spirit and consequently like mind as gesture; only it is sufficient with leisure to use a modest action in either.

"In all kinds of speech, either pleasant, grave, severe or ordinary, it is convenient to speak leisurely and rather drawingly than hastily; because hasty speech confounds the memory and oftentimes (besides unseemliness) drives a man either to a non plus, or unseemly stammering, harping upon that which should follow; whereas, a slow speech confirmeth the memory, addeth a conceit of wisdom to the hearers, besides a seemliness of speech and countenance.

"To desire in discourse to hold all argument is ridiculous, wanting true judgment, for in all things no man can be exquisite.

"To have commonplaces to discourse and to want variety is both tedious to the hearers and shows a shallowness of conceit, therefore it is good to vary and suit speeches with the present occasions, and to have a moderation in all speeches, especially in jesting, of religion, state, great persons, weighty and important business, poverty and anything that deserves pity.

"To use many circumstances ere you come to matter is wearisome; and to use none at all is but blunt.

"Bashfulness is a great hindrance to a man both in uttering his conceit and understanding what is propounded unto him; wherefore it is good to press himself forwards with discretion both in speech and in company of the better sort."

Bacon's Aphorism No. 1.—"Man as the minister and interpreter of nature does and understands as much as his observation on the order of nature, either with regard to things or the mind, permit him, and neither knows nor is capable of more."

"*Hamlet*.—What a piece of work is [^]man! how noble *af* in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!"

Aphorism No. 1 is much more like Bunsby than like Shakespeare.

Considering Bacon's extensive reading and familiarity with the literature of the day, which must have included very much upon the subject of speech and conversation, it is singular that he should have thought such a composition as his Short Notes of sufficient

merit or value for publication. I have read among the numerous eulogies of Bacon that his prose is like Shakespeare's poetry. Certainly there is nothing in any sentences that I have quoted to justify such an opinion, and they are not different in that respect from others that may follow.

In his *Short Notes* he misuses words and uses repetition inexcusably. They are ungrammatical and discordantly awkward in construction. (The Rev. Mr. Abbot, in his introduction to Mrs. Pott's work on Bacon's *Promus*, says, "The errors in the Latin and Greek are Bacon's, and are of a nature to make Latin and Greek scholars uneasy.") It does not seem likely that errors of this kind, which are so noticeable, arise from carelessness, for he was a laborious and painstaking writer; nor is it supposable that he would have issued a paper of which he entertained doubts regarding its value and finish. My purpose is simply to suggest that the faults are in the nature of the man, and that in all his productions there is lacking the nice perception and rhythm of the poet.

In all probability Queen Elizabeth must have read his essay upon *Masques and Triumphs*. It was a critique upon an entertainment purely of the court, and therefore would only interest the court. As she was exceedingly vain of her literary acquirements, his *Short Notes* would also naturally come under her attention. These two facts alone would, in the judgment of some, be sufficient ground for the queen's disbelief in his ability other than legal. His *Novum Organum* was published after her death, and dedicated

to King James, who admitted that it was beyond his comprehension. Queen Elizabeth judged him by evidence of such gifts as concern this inquiry.

In proof that King James' confession of his inability to understand the scientific work does not convict him of very dense ignorance, see this heading of one of the chapters of *Advancement of Learning*: "The art of judgment divided into induction and the syllogism—Induction developed in the *Novum Organum*—The syllogism divided into direct and inverse reduction—Inverse reduction divided into the doctrine of analytics and confutations—The division of the latter into confutations of sophisms, the unmasking of vulgarisms (equivocal terms), and the destruction of delusive images or idols—Delusive appearances divided into *idola tribus*, *idola specus* and *idola fori*—Appendix to the art of judgment—The adapting the demonstration to the nature of the subject." This was all in Latin, and it is doubtful if a trio of men in the kingdom knew what it meant. In the *Novum Organum* Bacon invented a nomenclature suited to *his* fancy of the subject, but so rude as never to have been accepted by any others; such as, "Idols of the Tribe," "Idols of the Den," "Idols of the Market," and "Idols of the Theatre," to describe races, individuals, commerce and false theories. Under the latter head he included everything not his own—in his own words, "All the systems of philosophy hitherto received or imagined." He also originated such terms as "twitching instances" and "lancing instances," because the former "twitched the understanding" and the latter "pierced nature." King

James' frank avowal apparently cost him no blushes. To have affected an understanding of the work or an interest in it would only have made him singular, perhaps ridiculous. Macaulay says, "The faults of James, both as a man and a prince, were numerous, but insensibility to the claims of genius and learning was not among them."

In book vi. (Devey edition) *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon treats of method of speech, wisdom of delivery, etc. Rhetoric he calls "traditive prudence," and says of it, "A third collection wanting to the apparatus of rhetoric is what we call lesser forms, and these are a kind of portals, postern doors, outer rooms, back rooms, and passages of speech, which may serve indifferently for all subjects, such as prefaces, conclusions, digressions, transitions, etc. For, as in a building a good distribution of the frontispiece, staircases, doors, windows, entries, passages and the like is not only agreeable but useful, so in speeches, if the accessories or underparts be decently and skillfully contrived and placed, they are of great ornament and service to the whole structure of the discourse."

This is certainly the "apparatus" of rhetoric, and is mechanical to the plainest degree. Is it not a most ordinary conception of the subject of elegant literature? It would, in these times, excite the ridicule of a boy's schoolmates. It is too dull for Shakespeare's fools. If Shakespeare had written about the doors, windows, back rooms and staircases of speech, he would have put it in the mouth of a Dogberry, and would have mingled some drollery with it to make its absurdity amusing.

The cipher theory has that in its favor that it is on the plane of Bacon's genius; but it is the kind of detective work that makes the claimant less worthy. It is not a cipher that is needed to make a Shakespeare of Bacon; it is some evidence primarily that he possessed to any degree the incomparable poetic fancy and dramatic genius of Shakespeare. If he had desired to lay claim to the plays, he was too shrewd a lawyer to have chosen a means as uncertain and difficult as that. He was not wanting in cunning and strategy, and could easily have contrived a plan to explode the mystery of his dramatic gifts when the gifts from princes could no longer be enjoyed. To his champions, however, inconsistency, improbability and stupidity have no weight. Some of them go to Shakespeare's grave to find evidence of Bacon's work. If such testimony were to be found in an epitaph, how much more reasonable it would be to look for it at Bacon's tomb! An inscription containing a cipher that would reveal a secret might have been placed there without attracting any attention, which could not have been done at Stratford; but, instead of such a thing, this is what Devey says of his grave: "He was buried in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans, by the side of his mother. A monument was soon after erected to his memory by his secretary, Sir Thomas Meantys, which represents him in a sitting posture, with an inscription which strangely parodies the sublime opening of the Instauration: 'Franciscus Bacon, Baro de Verulam, St. Albani Viccomes . . . sic sedebat'" (sat thus). "A stranger standing over the grave of the great regenerator of physical science might

fairly expect to be entertained with something better than a pun upon one of the most striking passages in his writings."

The cipher discovery seems to me too absurd for serious thought; but there are people who evidently do not appreciate its mechanical difficulties. It would be impossible for any one but a printer to arrange a cipher upon a printed sheet. The printed page and the manuscript vary greatly from each other; but for the purpose of such a device all inaccuracy would have to be absolutely avoided. If such a thing were *possible*, it could not be done without the full aid and co-operation of the printer. It would require an immense amount of revision, alteration, time, labor and conference with the author, and no one could carry through such a scheme and conceal it from the compositor. We know absolutely that there was nothing of this in 1623. It is singular that any one should find it easier to accept such a flimsy and impracticable theory than to recognize the simple fact of Shakespeare's genius.

The history of the plays heightens its impracticability. Appleton's Encyclopædia says, "Of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays, seventeen were printed separately in quartos, in almost every instance without his co-operation and in many instances from copies surreptitiously obtained. The text of most of these quarto copies is very corrupt and imperfect. In 1623 two of his fellow actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, superintended the publication of the first collected edition of his Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, from which, however, Pericles was omitted. This volume, known as the first folio,

contains the only authentic text of Shakespeare's plays. But its authority is grievously impaired by the careless manner in which it was printed, and by the fact that in some cases it was put in type from the surreptitious and imperfect quartos which it was intended to supersede, and the errors which it not infrequently perpetuates; but it corrects vastly more errors than it repeats, and it supplies many deficiencies, although it leaves many to be supplied. Plainly, too, most of the quarto copies from which it was printed had been used as stage copies by Shakespeare's company, and thus received many corrections which were at least quasi authoritative. Of the text of twenty of the plays it is the only source. The text of Shakespeare's works, excepting his poems, was left in so corrupt a state by the early printers that, the author's manuscript having perished, it needed much editorial care to bring it even into a tolerably sound condition."

It must be borne in mind that when this folio edition was printed Shakespeare had been dead seven years. It was at least twelve years since the last play was written, and some of these plays were thirty years old. Bacon was not even in London, but at his house at Gorhambury in disgrace. His sentence was proclaimed in 1621, and not until 1624 was it entirely remitted. It cannot then by any possibility be supposed that he had the most remote agency in the printing of the folio edition which it is claimed contains a device of such exactness as to the paging and number of words contained on the pages, that by some manner of using them a story is disclosed which proves that the criminal, for-

bidden to come within the verge of the court, wrote Shakespeare's plays.

It is singular that history fixes the whereabouts of Bacon just at this time. There probably was no man more notorious than he at that time. He was scheming to get back into office, misrepresenting instances of celebrated men in history in order to make his offence seem less culpable, utterly without shame, and his successor trying his utmost to defeat him. The plays were collected and published during that time. Twenty of them had never been published; some had been in print as much as thirty years, and for many years were used upon the stage. The printers cut them, and Shakespeare's two friends did their utmost to put them in print as nearly perfect as possible. It is common to hear regrets that Shakespeare did not publish his plays, that we might have them in perfect form: now we have a theory that even the careless usage that they received, the years of knocking about the theatre, the uncertainty as to the genuine and the spurious, and the cutting and slashing by the printers, have not even altered or changed the text enough to dislocate a cipher that existed in the manuscript. Many of the plays, and notably too those which it is claimed furnish this arithmetical device, had not been in manuscript for twenty years, but had passed through an intermediate publication. When it is considered that the disarrangement of a single word would destroy the whole fabric, and that all these requirements must be accurately observed by people who did not even suspect that such a weighty secret existed, it must be considered the most extraordinary mechan-

ical coincidence that ever happened. There is but one way of explaining it, and that is, that its ingenuity was so miraculous that no accident or design could destroy it.

While Bacon's writings exist or the record of his political career is accessible, no cipher or arithmetical device can show him capable of producing the plays. If in some musty archives Bacon's sworn affidavit should be found, asserting his authorship of the plays, I should still hear the ramshackle verse of the 104th Psalm, and remember that he was a corrupt judge and a monumental toady, and that in some cases he had not even the honor to perform the service for which he had sold himself. Indeed, it is supposed by Macaulay that he had carried his venality so far as to accept bribes from both sides of the litigation. It is surprising that any one should desire to attribute the sublimest creation in literature to the "meanest of mankind" (Pope). If proofs and evidences of his genius were abundant and not to be denied or refuted, then it would be with reluctance that I could admit that a man of Bacon's character and nature could create characters and write a philosophy so utterly unlike anything in his published works. I could never feel the same joy in the plays if I believed Bacon to have had even the most distant connection with them.

I think Macaulay tried to be just to Bacon in his essay upon him, but it is a terrible arraignment of his character. He says, "When accused of accepting bribes, he assured his friends in the strongest terms of his innocence. He afterwards confessed his guilt, and

begged the lords to be merciful to a broken reed. He admitted that he had no defence, and submitted his confession, and said, 'It is my act, my hand, my heart.' Mr. Montague has labored hard to prove his confession to have been a falsehood on his part, made at the request of the king. He assures us that Bacon was innocent, and that he had the means of making a perfectly satisfactory defence, and that when he plainly and ingenuously confessed that he was guilty of corruption, and when he afterwards solemnly affirmed that his confession was his act, his hand, his heart, he was telling a great lie, and that he refrained from bringing forth proofs of his innocence because he durst not disobey the king and the favorite who for selfish objects pressed him to plead guilty. It seems strange that Mr. Montague should not perceive that, while attempting to vindicate Bacon's reputation, he is really casting on it the foulest of all aspersions. He imputes to his idol a degree of meanness and depravity more loathsome than judicial corruption. A corrupt judge may have many good qualities; but a man who, to please a powerful patron, solemnly declares himself guilty of corruption, when he knows himself to be innocent, must be a monster of servility and impudence."

Bacon presided at the torture of a poor old clergyman named Peacham, whom he was prosecuting for treason, and against whom no evidence existed except a few sheets of loose manuscript, which were accidentally found in his home when the constables broke in to search for proof of libel against his bishop. They were not even intended for publication, and had never

been preached, but were simply the poor man's private thoughts in justification of resistance to tyranny. Bacon fell upon him, and pursued him to his death. (One of the sentences in Bacon's collection of *Ornamenta Rationalia* reads, "Pain makes even the innocent man a liar," but Peacham proved an exception.) Bacon used all his ingenuity, even to tampering with the judges, to secure the conviction of the old man, and he succeeded. The government, however, from "very shame at the futility of the charges," did not carry out the sentence, but the man languished and died in prison. His record in this persecution is simply atrocious. Macaulay: "In order to convict Peacham, it was necessary to find facts as well as law. Accordingly this wretched old man was put to the rack, and, while undergoing the horrible infliction, was examined by Bacon, but in vain. No confession could be wrung out of him, and Bacon wrote to the king complaining that Peacham had a dumb devil." If the old man had been a dangerous character and Bacon had been actuated by an honest desire to serve the state, it would even then have been revolting for an officer of the crown to go to the Tower to practice such sickening cruelty upon a suspected old man; but when we know that Bacon labored to influence the judges to assist him in the prosecution, and among his printed papers there is an admission that pain extorts lies, and not the truth, from the innocent, and when the fact is considered that the government sympathized so little with his servile zeal as to refuse to carry out its own sentence, his mercenary and heartless character in the pursuit of court favor is

exposed. And yet this cold-blooded inquisitor seems to have a following who believe that he wrote—

“The quality of mercy is not strained ;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed ;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute of God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.”

There has never been a scrap of evidence to show that the poet who wrote these lines had any fellowship or personal acquaintance with Bacon. If theories that have nothing but supposable probability for a foundation were admissible, I might suggest the influence of Bacon about the court as one of the causes that shortened Shakespeare's career on the stage, and decided his return to Stratford.

Macaulay says, “His faults were—we write it with pain—coldness of heart and meanness of spirit. He seems to have been incapable of feeling strong affection, of facing great dangers, of making great sacrifices. His desires were set on things below. Wealth, precedence, titles, patronage, the mace, the seals, the coronet, large houses, fair gardens, rich manors, massive service of plate, gay hangings, curious cabinets, had as great

attractions for him as for any of the courtiers who dropped on their knees in the dirt when Elizabeth passed by, and then hastened home to write to the king of Scots that her grace seemed to be breaking fast. For these objects he stooped to everything and endured everything. For these he had sued in the humblest manner; and when unjustly and ungraciously repulsed, had thanked those who had repulsed him, and had begun to sue again. For these objects, as soon as he found that the smallest show of independence in Parliament was offensive to the queen, he had abased himself in the dust before her, and implored forgiveness in terms better suited to a convicted thief than a knight of the shire. For these he joined and for these he forsook Lord Essex. He continued to plead his patron's cause with the queen as long as he thought that by pleading that cause he might serve himself. Nay, he went further; for his feelings, though not warm, were kind: he pleaded that cause as long as he thought he could plead it without injury to himself. But when it became evident that Essex was going headlong to his ruin, Bacon began to tremble for his own fortunes. What he had to fear would not have been very alarming to a man of lofty character. It was not death. It was not imprisonment. It was the loss of court favor. It was the being left behind by others in the career of ambition. When once he had determined to act against his friend, knowing himself to be suspected, he acted with more zeal than would have been necessary or justifiable if he had been employed by a stranger. He exerted his professional talents to shed the earl's

blood, and his literary talents to blacken the earl's memory."

Essex had given Bacon Twickenham Court (a place so beautiful that Bacon called it Garden of Paradise) simply in compensation for his disappointment at not being able to procure him some government post that had been vacant. He was under no obligation to him whatever, but Essex seems to have been the one man who for a long time had a sincere friendship for Bacon. This was purely the gift of a man of generous nature to another whose real character he did not suspect. Essex had even urged Bacon's suit with a rich widow when he thought of making his fortune by marriage; unsuccessfully, however, as she, having read his Essay on Love, did not believe him capable of such a passion. In the trials he attacked Essex, who was not allowed counsel, with such venom that he interrupted Bacon and called upon him to quit the part of an advocate and come forward as a witness.

It is worthy of mention that Shakespeare's friend the Earl of Southampton—to whom he dedicated his *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*—was arraigned, convicted and sentenced with the Earl of Essex. The queen spared Southampton's life, and he was a prisoner in the Tower at the time of her death. He was liberated upon the accession of James to the English throne. It does not add anything to the probability of any mercantile transactions or secret understanding between Shakespeare and Bacon that Bacon should have been such an active and mortal enemy of Shakespeare's friend and patron in this political episode.

Macaulay says of Bacon, "He was one of the last of the tools of power who persisted in a practice the most barbarous and the most absurd that has ever disgraced jurisprudence,—a practice of which, in the preceding generation, Elizabeth and her ministers had been ashamed. The practice of torturing prisoners was then generally acknowledged to be illegal, and was execrated by the public as barbarous. Queen Elizabeth in her reign had issued an order positively forbidding the torturing of prisoners under any pretence whatever. Bacon far behind his age! Bacon clinging to exploded abuses! Bacon withstanding the progress of improvement! Bacon struggling to push back the human mind!"

During the time he held the great seal he was the willing instrument of a ring of public plunderers, and granted infamous monopolies to the court favorites equal to any of the like conspiracies that have become notorious among our modern politicians. Macaulay: "Having assisted the patentees to obtain this monopoly, Bacon assisted them also in the steps which they took to guard it. He committed several people to close confinement for disobeying his tyrannical edicts. The patentees were armed with powers as great as have ever been given to farmers of the revenue in the worst-governed countries. They were authorized to search houses and arrest interlopers, and these formidable powers were used for purposes viler than even those for which they were given—for the wreaking of old grudges and for the corrupting of female chastity. The man who stooped to render such services to others was not likely to be scrupulous as to the means by which he enriched

himself. He and his dependents accepted large presents from persons who were engaged in chancery suits. The amount of plunder which he collected in this way it is impossible to estimate. There can be no doubt that he received much more than was proved on the trial, though it may be less than was suspected by the public. His enemies stated his gains at a hundred thousand pounds (\$700,000 at that time of our present money), but this was probably an exaggeration."

On one occasion, when Bacon felt well assured of his place, he ventured to meddle in some private matter of Buckingham's. He immediately discovered his mistake, and sought with the most sickening servility to regain Buckingham's favor.

Macaulay says of it, "It is said that on two successive days Bacon repaired to Buckingham's house, that on two successive days he was suffered to remain in an ante-chamber among foot-boys, seated on a wooden box, with the great seal of England at his side, and that at length, when he was admitted, he flung himself on the floor, kissed the favorite's feet, and vowed never to rise until he was forgiven.

"In return for the remission of the remaining part of his sentence, several years after, he requited the royal favor by writing two party pamphlets for the royal favorite, Buckingham: one entitled *Some Considerations Touching a War with Spain*, in which Bacon strives to excite the nation to make an unjustifiable attack upon an unoffending ally; the other, called *An Advertisement Touching an Holy War*, was neither more nor less than a dialogue on the lawfulness of

propagating religion by the sword." The strongest argument put forth is the treasures of gold and silver to be gained by such conquest; and he cites the Castilians' subjugation of Mexico, Peru, Chili and parts of the West Indies to make his motive clear.

His own historian says in the introduction to his works, "He could see nothing except through the senses, and was disposed to undervalue everything that did not contribute to physical enjoyment or tangible glory."

The introduction alluded to says elsewhere, "Bacon even entertained hopes of resuming his seat in the Lords, if not on the woolsack, and did not scruple in his letters to James to pervert history with a view to establish similar cases of disintegration. 'Demosthenes,' says Bacon in one of these communications, 'was banished for bribery of the highest nature, yet was recalled with honor. Marcus Lucius was condemned for exactions, yet afterwards made consul and censor. Seneca was banished for divers corruptions, yet was afterwards restored, and an instrument in the memorable Quinquenium Neronis.'"

It is not a pleasing task to copy a mass of detail of such discreditable nature, and to seek to show the weak and unworthy side of a man's character, particularly of a man who was so anxious that in the future, at least, his name should be honored, and who in his will appealed to the kind judgment of mankind—"For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches, to foreign nations and to the next generation." In one sense, particularly, it is less welcome, and that

is that it is done in denial of a claim that he never made. The authorities which I quote are well known to every one interested in Bacon, for they are the people who have written his life and arranged and edited his works. They are all his admirers in some respects (Macaulay included, as I shall show), and none deny him genius. Spedding's much-qualified praise of his undeveloped "poetic passion" is not intended as any disparagement of his real gifts, for Spedding knew that Bacon made no claim to dramatic talent, and that he considered it (in his own language) "a culpable waste of time" in a man of such scientific attainments, and Spedding apparently approved.

Bacon's political career is a matter of history and easily found. It and the philosophy of his essays and speculative works, also all the facts and information that can be obtained as to the character, habits, interests and employments of both men, have an important bearing upon the subject in determining the question of authorship.

My object is to present Bacon, by his own writings, by his biographers, his acts and his critics; to suggest the conclusions and impressions that these authorities and evidences convey to my mind, and to invite those interested to an examination of the same data.

If the extracts which I have made and the facts which I have advanced represent him fairly, he was a man of limited fancy, earthly taste, mechanical imagination and material sense; and these are not the qualities that any one attributes to Shakespeare.

CHAPTER IV.

Bacon as a "soaring angel"—Advice to the person who has incurred the displeasure of his prince—Thrift that follows fawning—Extracts from various essays—Essay on the True Greatness of Kingdoms—His attitude toward the civilization of his time.

WHILE Macaulay heaps every reproach that language permits upon Bacon's character and conduct, he credits him with very different qualities as a student. He says, "The difference between the soaring angel and the creeping snake was but a type of the difference between Bacon the philosopher and Bacon the attorney-general,—Bacon seeking truth, and Bacon seeking the seals. Those who survey only one half of his character may speak of him with unmixed admiration or unmixed contempt. In his library all his rare powers were under the guidance of an honest ambition, of an enlarged philanthropy, of a sincere love of truth." I have copied this because I think it unjust to cite that which is so scathing and to omit what qualifies it on the other side.

If it is true that Bacon's writings were so pure, while his acts were deserving of "unmixed contempt," then some of my assertions do him injustice. I would not presume to dispute the judgment of the great essayist, but I may produce some of these writings in evidence of conclusions that I have formed, not at all in agreement with this idea. I cannot believe in such a dual nature, and cannot understand how a man's out-door

exploits can be so vile while his studies are so angelic, as naturally the latter is the preparation for the former.

In Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* there is an article upon the way in which a man should act who wishes to regain the favor of his superior, which follows so closely some of Macaulay's descriptions of his servility as to furnish an instance of what I mean.

“‘If the displeasure of great men rise up against thee, forsake not thy place; for pliant behavior extenuates great offences’ (Prov. 29 : 11).

“This aphorism shows how a person ought to behave when he has incurred the displeasure of his prince. The precept hath two parts—(1) that the person quit not his post, and (2) that he with diligence and caution apply to the cure as of a dangerous disease. For when men see their prince incensed against them, what through impatience of disgrace, fear of renewing the wound by sight, and partly to let their prince behold their contrition and humiliation, it is usual for them to retire from their office or employ, and sometimes to resign their places and dignities into their prince's hands. But Solomon disparages this method as pernicious. For (1) it publisheth the disgrace too much; whence both our enemies and enviers are more emboldened to hurt us, and our friends the more intimidated from lending us their assistance. (2) By this means the anger of the prince, which perhaps would have blown over of itself had it not been made public, becomes more fixed; and having now begun to displease the person, ends not but in his downfall. (3) The resigning carries something of ill will with it, and shows a

dislike of the times, which adds the evil of indignation to that of suspicion. The following remedies regard the cure: (1) Let him above all things beware how by any insensibility or elation of mind he seems regardless of his prince's displeasure or not affected as he ought. He should not compose his countenance to a stubborn melancholy, but to a grave and decent dejection; and show himself in all actions less brisk and cheerful than usual. It may also be for his advantage to use the assistance and mediation of a friend with the prince, seasonably to insinuate with how great a sense of grief the person in disgrace is inwardly affected. (2) Let him carefully avoid even the least occasions of reviving the thing which caused the displeasure, or of giving any handle to fresh distaste and open rebuke. (3) Let him diligently seek all occasions wherein his service may be acceptable to his prince, that he may both show a ready desire of retrieving his past offence, and his prince perceive what a servant he must lose if he quit him. (4) Either let him prudently transfer the blame upon others, or insinuate that the offence was committed with no evil desire, or show that their malice who accused him to the prince aggravated the thing above measure. (5) Lastly, let him in every respect be watchful and intent upon the cure."

I do not know how to read this article and make it mean anything less than moral obliquity. It does not come under the head of either of the qualities ascribed by Macaulay to Bacon "in his library," and least of all is it a sincere "love of truth." On the contrary, without the slightest compunction, with no attempted

casuistry, and apparently with no consciousness of the evil of the teaching, he advises the man who has incurred the "displeasure of his prince" to tell the meanest kind of a falsehood and put the blame on another. If there is any other way of reading such passages—and it would seem as though Bacon's admirers and some of his biographers possessed such a faculty—then it may be capable of a different construction; but as it is in such perfect accord with his lifelong attitude toward his superiors, it seems reasonable that he meant it and believed it.

One can easily imagine him to have written it before starting out to wait upon Buckingham, and that he studied it again before going the second day to sit in the ante-room among the foot-boys.

It is questionable if any writer but Bacon ever descended to a study of the look a man should assume and the gait he should adopt in order to propitiate the displeasure of his prince. It was the lack of manliness, exposed here, which made it possible for him to thank those who "repulsed him and sue again," and the same absence of shame and truthfulness that permitted him to misrepresent historical characters in order to invent precedents by which he hoped to brave out his disgrace and return to power and position. And I may be allowed to suppose that Shakespeare, who probably knew Bacon's character thoroughly, had him in his thought when he wrote,

"Let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning."

In nothing that he says is there a full reliance upon a sure return for a virtuous action or moral principle. He has no faith in character. The opening sentence in his Short Notes is a fair example of his foxy philosophy: "to deceive men's expectations generally (with cautel) argueth a staid mind and unexpected constancy." In plain meaning: Be on your guard. Conceal your real intentions. Never be frank, open, natural or straightforward. His philosophy is the science of outwitting others; and much of his essays is simply lessons in craft, artifice and finesse.

In his Essay on Discourse he says, "If you dissemble sometimes your knowledge of that you are thought to know, you shall be thought, another time, to know that you know not."

Essay on Fortune: "Certainly, there be not two more fortunate properties than to have a little of the fool and not too much of the honest."

On Negotiation: "If you would work any man, you must either know his nature and fashions, and so lead him; or his ends, and so persuade him; or his weaknesses and disadvantages, and so awe him; or those that have an interest in him, and so govern him."

Essay on Ceremonies and Respects: "It is a good precept, generally, in seconding another, yet to add somewhat of one's own, as: if you will grant his opinion, let it be with some distinction; if you will follow his motion, let it be with condition; if you will allow his counsel, let it be with alleging further reason."

Every one who has had any experience in committees in public bodies will recognize this picture of the man

who always wants to "add something of his own." He is the marplot of every body of men who try to accomplish any work, and the Baconian idea seems to be his way of making his influence felt.

I do not mean to say that Bacon does not dislike falsehood and admire truth, or that he does not commend all the virtues. This he does; but in no positive manner. In his Essay on Truth he says, "Mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it." In another passage, "Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day, but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations, as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?" In another essay, "The best composition and temperament is to have an openness in fame and opinions, secrecy in habit, dissimulation in seasonable use, and a power to feign, if there be no remedy."

The essays abound in these half-beliefs. That which is false may not be a creditable member of his moral family, but it is a useful one, and one that he cannot afford to disown or turn out of doors; for in emergencies, such as that of the man who wants to "cure the dangerous disease" and does *not* want to *lose his place*, it may, in the end, be the only thing that will save him.

In his Essay on Cunning he is so much in sympathy with the subject that I am unable to determine how much of it is intended as commendation of the shifts, tricks and snares cited, and how much is simply descriptive of the quality. For instance, he says, "If a man would cross a business that he doubts some other would handsomely and effectually move, let him pretend to wish it well, and move it himself in such sort as may foil it." His letters to Essex contain advice of this same character; he writes, "*You may serve your turn by pretence of it, and stay it nevertheless.*" Again, "*But I say keep it in substance, but abolish it in shows to the queen.*" Again, "Your lordship should never be without some particulars afoot, *which you should seem to pursue with earnestness and affection, and let them fall upon taking knowledge of her majesty's opposition and dislike.*"

I think Macaulay refers to the *Novum Organum* when he compares Bacon to the "soaring angel." It is a work of quite limited size, and treats of matters which cannot be compared with imaginative works. It is foreign also to any questions of political character. In some places it contains the usual disparagement of works of fiction and the imagination, which I will speak of hereafter. The evidence of Bacon's absorbing interest in it is everywhere evident, and there can be no doubt but that he supposed it would displace and supersede everything of the like character "hitherto received or imagined," which he described as "so many plays brought out and performed, creating fictitious and theatrical worlds." Yet his interest in peaceful arts

and employments is qualified by such passages as the following, from his essays :

“It is certain that sedentary and within-door arts, and delicate manufactures (that require rather the finger than the arm), have in their nature a contrariety to a military disposition ; and generally all warlike people are a little idle, and love danger better than travail, neither must they be too much broken of it if they shall be preserved in vigor : therefore it was great advantage in the ancient states of Sparta, Athens, Rome and others that they had the use of slaves, which commonly did rid those manufactures ; but that is abolished, in greatest part, by the Christian law. That which cometh nearest to it is to leave those arts chiefly to strangers (which, for that purpose, are to be more easily received), and to contain the principal bulk of the vulgar natives within those three kinds, tillers of the ground, free servants, and handicraftsmen of strong and manly arts ; as smiths, masons, carpenters, etc., not being professed soldiers.”

I am aware that Bacon's idea of the True Greatness of Kingdoms, which sets forth his principles on the subject of war and conquest, may not interest those who are simply looking for evidence of his relation to dramatic art ; but this subject occupies a large place in Bacon's writings and indicates his attitude toward the civilization of his time, and properly belongs to a study of his character.

He wrote two papers for Buckingham in return for the remission of his sentence : one entitled *Some Considerations touching a War with Spain*, “in which

he strives to excite the nation to make an unjustifiable attack upon an unoffending ally ;” the other, An Advertisement touching an Holy War, “ which was nothing more nor less than a dialogue upon the lawfulness of propagating religion by the sword.” These were not in any sense angelic papers. He was an advocate of war for itself, for conquest, for spoils, but condemned it for liberty. He says, “ But above all for empires and greatness it importeth most that a nation do profess arms as their principal honor, study and occupation. No nation which doth not directly profess arms may look to have greatness fall into their mouths. Incident to this point is, for a state to have those laws or customs which may reach forth unto them just occasions (as may be pretended) of war, for there is that justice imprinted in the nature of man, that they enter not upon wars (whereof so many calamities do ensue) but upon some at least specious grounds and quarrels. The Turk hath at hand for cause of war the propagation of his law or sect, a quarrel that he may always command. The Romans, though they esteemed the extending the limits of their empire to be a great honor to their generals when it was done, yet they never rested upon that alone to begin a war. First, therefore, let nations that pretend to greatness have this, that they be sensible of wrongs, either upon borderers, merchants or politic ministers, and that they sit not too long upon a provocation ; secondly, let them be pressed and ready to give aid and succors to their confederates as it ever was with the Romans ; insomuch, as if the confederate had leagues defensive with divers other states, and upon

invasion offered did implore their aids severally, yet the Romans would ever be the foremost and leave it to none other to have the honor. As for wars which were anciently made on the behalf of a kind of party or tacit conformity of estate, I do not see how they can be well justified; as when the Romans made a war for the liberty of Græcia, or when the Lacedemonians and Athenians made wars to set up or pull down democracies or oligarchies, or when wars were made by foreigners under the pretence of justice, or protection to deliver the subjects of others from tyranny and oppression and the like. No body can be healthful without exercise, neither natural body nor politic, and certainly to a kingdom or estate a just and honorable war is the true exercise."

Of the spoils he says, "The triumphs of the generals upon their return, the great donatives and largesses upon the disbanding of the armies, were things able to inflame all men's courage, but above all, that of the triumph amongst the Romans was not pageants or gaudery, but one of the wisest and noblest institutions that ever was, for it contained three things: honor to the general, riches to the treasury out of the spoils, and donatives to the army; but that honor, perhaps, were not fit for monarchies, except it be in the person of the monarch himself, or his sons, as it came to pass in the times of the Roman emperors, who did impropriate the actual triumphs to themselves and their sons for such wars as they did achieve in person, and left only for wars achieved by subjects some triumphal garment and ensigns to the general."

The same idea even more grossly expressed will be

found in the Advancement of Learning under the title of "A Readiness for War necessary." It is claimed by many for Bacon that he was a reformer and a philanthropist. No barbarian could have framed a policy better suited to satisfy the instincts of savages than this essay. It is not war for cause or for defence or for justice. He says he cannot justify war for liberty or against oppression, or by foreigners under the pretence of justice or to set up democracies. He advocates war as a profession, for military glory, for conquest and spoils, simply to destroy your neighbors and strengthen and enrich yourselves. He advises that there shall be at least a specious pretence of justification—not for the cause of justice, however, but to deceive those who fight better for a principle than without it. It is not a pretence of justice and liberty that he wants, but some imagined offence. He furnishes a list of pretexts for wars of such a nature, that no government seeking a quarrel need ever be without a provocation, *i. e.*, the propagation of sect, offences against politic ministers, against merchants, and the broils between the nation's allies and enemies. Bacon was an ideal politic minister for such a purpose, and the papers he wrote when his life was almost spent show what causes for bloodshed he could have been depended upon to foment. His historian says of his effort to inaugurate a religious war, "The king certainly had his hands full in trying to extirpate heresies, reconcile schisms and reform manners; but our author was inclined to think a war might be undertaken at the same time." The ring of plunderers to whom he granted the patents would at any

time have discovered an offence and furnished "the specious ground and just occasions as might be pretended;" in fact it was for the chief of them that he made his argument.

The crowning figure of his harangue, however, which he calls "one of the noblest and wisest things that ever was," is the victorious army disbanding and dividing the plunder. He says, "These are such great and dazzling things in the eyes of mortals, as to be capable of firing the most frozen spirits and inflaming them for war." No doubt but that such a sight and such rewards would incite the worst passions of the lowest order of men; but what a heartless and infamous motive to describe as one of the "noblest and wisest things that ever was"! The wisdom and nobility of such a sight could only appear to a man of the same nature and instincts as the soldiers he describes.

Bacon's life was passed in a time of the most inhuman sectarian strife. He was twelve years old when the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day took place, and thirteen when the Duke of Alva returned from his frightful holy war in the Netherlands. The horrors of "an holy war" and its adjunct the Inquisition were known to Bacon almost, if not actually, as an eye-witness; but instead of filling him with abhorrence, and ranging him on the side of humanity and progress, he regarded it as the true greatness of the kingdom.

Forbidden to come within the verge of the court, and an old man, he spent his time trying to tempt the greed of the nation, by the same arguments as are contained in his essays, to begin anew the bloody work.

Even the mean old Roman emperor who with his sons "impropriated" the booty and gave the general nothing but some garments and ensigns is readily justified. He was in most willing accord with the worst spirits of his age, and wrote of Henry VIII. as "one of the goodliest persons of his time." He uttered no protest or even regret at the abuse of power, but led in the wicked race and set up the fiercest examples of barbarism as the true glory of the people. He was without the "dint of pity" or a "touch of nature" that makes "the whole world kin."

If he had had any of the gentle nature that breathes in Shakespeare's poetry, instead of exulting over such a scene as the return of the red-handed soldiers loaded with their stolen plunder, he would, in imagination, have retraced the march of the marauders until he reached the ruined homes of the stricken enemy, and would have grieved at the degradation of human nature that could make such cruelty possible. If in these days it is thought that the benighted condition of the people in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was the cause of the savage dispositions of their rulers, Bacon knew better. He was familiar with noble examples in Greek and Roman history, and when he wanted an instance to compare with the queen's peaceful death, he could quickly recall Pius Antoninus, who lived and ruled fourteen hundred years before Bacon's time. It was because such examples of virtue, justice and wisdom did not move his admiration, and not from his ignorance of them, that he preferred the *worst* pagan examples to incite the Christians of his time to destroy each other.

CHAPTER V.

Bacon's interpretation of "A just man is merciful to his beast," etc.—His Essay on Deformity—His interpretation of another proverb—His habit of generalization—His Essay on Friendship—Mode of treatment for the human mind—His Essay on Love—His corpuscular study of Cupid.

IT was natural for Bacon to see everything in its bearing upon his political interests. He was always either an applicant for office or in nervous fear of being removed from one. His personal interests were so urgent that they colored everything he saw; consequently the subjects that he treats he brings down to the plane of his personal wants. They furnish the morals for his essays and the lessons which the proverbs convey to him. That which he reads has very little signification to him independent of the service it may be forced to perform in support of his schemes. His general theme is the duty of subjects to their princes and servants to their masters; and the rules that he proposes are the same as those which he followed in his attendance upon his superiors. As he never believed in resigning, he easily found a meaning in one of Solomon's proverbs that accorded with his view, and taught him the art of a "grave and decent dejection" and the "prudent" false accusation.

Another proverb that he has explained (?) is, "A just man is merciful to his beast, but the mercies of the wicked are cruel." He comments upon it in this wise:

“This comparison has some resemblance to that of a prince and his subjects. A great soul, the noblest part of creation, is ever compassionate. Nay, the Turks, though a cruel and bloody nation, give alms to brutes and suffer them not to be tortured. But, lest this principle might seem to countenance all kinds of compassion, Solomon wholesomely subjoins: That the mercies of the wicked are cruel: that is, when such great offenders are spared as ought to be cut off with the sword of justice.” Whatever the real meaning of this saying may have been when it was uttered, it certainly was not what Bacon has tried to draw from it. I have heard it explained in a way that is instructive, that contains a truth and gives mercy no uncertain meaning, viz., that the “wicked” is meant to describe him who by abuse has maimed and crippled his beast beyond usefulness, and made his life a burden to him, and, being touched with some degree of pity, mercifully puts him to death to end his sufferings; in contrast with the man who ever treats his beast humanely, or the one who, having killed the mother bird, out of compassion for the helpless little ones in the nest puts them to death to save them from hunger and starvation.

It is not singular that Bacon should entirely miss the sense of mercy in it; for one who could examine an old man on the rack and feel nothing but exasperation, disappointment and chagrin at his victim’s fortitude, courage and endurance, could have no knowledge of such a quality; and it is not probable that he believed his interpretation of it to be its true intent, but was simply using his own ingenuity in rendering it to suit

his personal objects. It may have been written when he was trying to destroy Essex, Southampton and their fellows indicted for treason, or when he found that the queen would not put Peacham to death. He was constantly engaged in ferreting out treason, and he wanted no "impunity" for "great offenders." His interpretation of it was calculated to save the fruits of his zeal as a servile tool for the court favorites, and he wanted authority to sustain his edicts; but it was entirely such necessities that suggested Solomon as having put forth a warning against mercy, because he feared that the tender care of dumb animals might unduly soften men's natures and lead them into an unwillingness to apprehend and punish criminals.

In view of the jealous and vindictive character of the rulers in Bacon's time, and for centuries previous to that, nothing can be imagined more needless than a fear of mercy or unmerited compassion. In Henry VIII.'s reign there were 70,000 people executed for violations of law; in Queen Elizabeth's reign they executed about an average of 400 a year. James I. burned heretics, and it was common to brand and torture those only suspected, and political prisoners were not allowed counsel. "The common people had generally no knowledge of many of the laws and penalties, but their ignorance was no defence. Even at the beginning of this century there were 160 offences punishable by death in England; for instance, stealing above the value of twelvepence, or maliciously tearing or defacing of the garments of a person passing in the street."—*Appleton's Encyclopædia*.

It was under such laws as these that Bacon issued the patents and assisted with his authority "purposes viler than those for which they were given" (Macaulay). Could anything be more confirmatory of the inborn depravity of his nature than that he could, in such a barbarous age, seek to distort such authority into an admonition against a sovereign's clemency? It was the "great offenders," and not the "army of evil-doers," that were his political rivals. Whereas the proverb says mercy of the wicked, Bacon reads it as the mercy of a prince toward great offenders. One would not misconstrue a precept in that way except with design. Suppose he should have applied it to his own case, as might have been done at a later period of his life. Then it would have been wicked in James I. to release him from the Tower and remit his fine, after he had been convicted of great crimes. Still the parallel is incomplete, for princes in those times did not spare subjects out of mercy and compassion, but from fear, policy and self-interest.

It is not the question of the original meaning of the proverb that I wish to emphasize, but the bias and temper in the nature of him who explains it. One finds in it a lesson of mercy that would reach the imagination of a child; the other finds in it a precedent of high authority to strengthen princes in the execution of enemies of the throne, or of troublesome subjects. Each, aided by his imagination and fancy, seeks to set forth the intent of a saying that has survived many ages and is supposed to contain a lesson of wisdom. With what purpose and effect Bacon has done this

these suggestions are designed to show. In my judgment it is simply a reflection of his own narrow interests, limited imagination and cruel instincts; and these are not the qualities that one can attribute to the writer of the plays.

The quality of mind most distant from a genius for delineation of character is that which cannot detect individual traits, personal peculiarities, and the shades of difference which distinguish the person from the class, or which cannot drop its own personality and enter into that of its imagination; and this is a feature of the question of the authorship of the plays, not second to any other. How far Bacon was able to read the human mind, beyond the needs of a detective, which a suspicion of courtiers' motives taught him, may be learned from some of his writings, in which he stamps people with mental and emotional qualities by the most thoughtless and arbitrary rules; for instance, in his *Essay on Deformity* he says, "Deformed persons are even with nature, for as nature hath done ill by them, so do they by nature, being for the most part (as the Scripture saith) void of natural affection, and so they have their revenge of nature. Whosoever hath anything fixed in his person that doth induce to contempt, hath also a personal spur in himself to rescue and deliver himself from scorn, therefore all deformed persons are extremely bold; first, as in their own defence, as being exposed to scorn, but in process of time by general habit. Also it stirreth in them industry, and especially of that kind to watch and observe the weakness of others that they may have something to

repay." (Then follows the usual casting up of their chances of preferment by kings.) He speaks of them again in his *Essay on Envy*, "Deformed persons and old men and bastards are envious; for he that cannot possibly mend his own case will do what he possibly can to impair another's."

In the sense that I desire to notice this kind of writing, its worst fault is not its falsity, but that he should have had such a dull comprehension of his subject as to suppose that the people whom he classes together were all of one pattern in such respects. The first thought suggested to me is that some aspirant at the court, of whom he was jealous, may have had a personal defect. He was jealous of his cousin Robert Cecil, and I think I have read that he was such a person. Perhaps he only knew the court fools and took them for examples of the whole fraternity, and his essay may as likely be the offspring of ignorance and prejudice as malice; but it is more fatal to his genius as an observer of human nature to draw such a sweeping and erroneous picture of a numerous class of people from such a fault, than if he had been actuated by personal dislike.

The people who are so afflicted do not need champions now, and probably did not then. To say that they are all bold, revengeful, envious and "void of natural affection," everybody knows to be the flattest kind of nonsense; and it is not at all improved by including all "old men" as "envious." There is nothing in his *Essay on Deformity* worth preserving. If what he says were true, it would have the effect of

embittering the afflicted people the more ; as it was not true, it was pernicious. He says they are scorned, yet suggests no compensation and makes no appeal in their behalf. There is not the least philanthropic intent. If it were an artistic study, or possessed any scientific interest, the absence of kindly purpose might be excused ; but there is nothing in it worth an apology for its existence. Every attempt on his part to write a moral or draw a picture ends in the same way. He was absorbed in his books and the political excitements of his time, and his vision only rested upon those who peopled his political experiences. He probably only knew the court jesters and their artificial life, and he carelessly imagined that all misshapen people were what they seemed to be ; or he knew some deformed person whom he hated. A small amount of observation would have taught him that physical deformity is no index of infirmity of character or disposition ; that it is no more an indication of moral blemish than physical beauty is of the reverse.

As another instance of the same habit of defining qualities by circumstances which do not affect them, read his understanding of "A wise son rejoiceth his father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother." He says, "The domestic joys and griefs of father and mother from their children are here distinguished, for a prudent and hopeful son is a capital pleasure to the father, who knows the value of virtue better than the mother, and therefore rejoices more at his son's disposition to virtue. This joy may also be heightened perhaps from seeing the good effect of his own manage-

ment in the education of his son, so as to form good morals in him by precept and example. On the other hand, the mother suffers and partakes the most in the calamity of her son because the maternal affection is the more soft and tender, and again perhaps because she is conscious that her indulgence has spoiled and depraved him."

Bacon's faculty was for classification. His first thought was to assort the parts of a subject and label them. He invented a nomenclature much like his "apparatus of rhetoric" in his *Novum Organum*, that may have been useful to the readers of that work, which it is said "was received with admiration by a discerning few, but with scorn by the would-be wits of the time." In his essays he proceeds upon the same principle, and arranges people in classes and tickets them with properties peculiar to them. The following will be found among his observations:

"Old men are envious. Deformed people are all bold, malicious and, for the most part, void of natural affection.

"Fathers know the value of virtue better than mothers, and rejoice in it more in their sons than do mothers. It is the father's management and example which forms the son's good morals. The mother's indulgence probably depraves the foolish son, and she feels the calamity more than the father.

"The errors of young men are the ruin of business, but the errors of old age amount to but this, that more could have been done and sooner.

"Young men in the conduct and management of

actions embrace more than they can hold ; stir more than they can quiet ; fly to the end without consideration of the means and degrees ; pursue some few principles which they have chanced upon absurdly ; care not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniences ; use extreme remedies at first ; and that, which doubleth all errors, will not acknowledge or retract them, like an unready horse, that will neither stop nor turn.

“Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success.

“He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune ; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity, and single men, though they be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hard-hearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so often called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands.

“It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives ; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husband’s kindness when it comes, or that the wives take a pride in their patience ; but this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing against their friends’ consent, for then they will be sure to make good their folly.

“A man that hath no virtue in himself ever envieth virtue in others ; for men’s minds will either feed upon

their own good or upon another's evil; and who wanteth the one will prey upon the other, and whoso is out of hope to attain another's virtue will seek to come at even hand, by depressing another's fortune.

"In the youth of a state arms do flourish, in the middle age of a state learning, and then both of them together for a time; in the declining age of a state mechanical arts and merchandise.

"Martial men are given to love as they are given to wine, for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures."

I have copied these extracts to show Bacon's habit of generalization. Yet some of his assertions are so singular that one wonders by what process of reasoning or by what experience he arrives at such conclusions.

It is unaccountable that young men should be so rash and headstrong, "stir more than they can quiet, and fly to the end," etc., and yet not care to innovate.

If we accept his view, it never fails that when a woman takes a bad husband of her own free will and against the consent of her friends, she proves a patient wife and "makes good her folly."

If it is true that arts and manufactures flourish in the decline of a state, we have grave cause of alarm nowadays; and with such a view, why was it that he devoted so much study to this subject in the *Novum Organum*, and why did he attempt such a description of them in their perfection in his ideal New Atlantis?

Perhaps it may be captious to ask these questions. I wish to urge simply that his writing is mostly of a hit-or-miss character; he was full of prejudices, and much that he wrote was dictated by the idea of the precept

that he commends in his *Essay on Ceremonies and Respects*, viz., to "add something of one's own." If, in ordinary conversation, one should ramble on in such a chance fashion, lumping all people together and then dividing them up, in their mental qualities, affections and dispositions, by such arbitrary and accidental rules as age, sex and stature, he would either claim a large amount of indulgence or find few listeners.

It is so far the opposite of the poet as to hardly need a comment, and particularly of Shakespeare. In him there are no types, and not even two fools alike. His is a faculty that has no rules, but is as free as the imagination, that reads intuitively the human mind and understands its motives, its reasonings, its humor, the impulses that govern its actions, its possibilities: the gift that creates individuals and peoples romance with a world of characters more real than history.

Bacon's mind is full of cures, of remedies and of recipes. He would construct and correct everything after some precept or prescription. He is so devoted to physics that he associates the qualities of the mind with the same nostrums that he would prescribe for the diseases of the body. He says of Friendship, "A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fullness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings and suffocations are the most dangerous of the body, and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarsaparilla to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flour of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain, but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend."

This is a loathsome simile of a beautiful human quality, and his conception of the quality was on a level with his gross description of it. Such extracts from Bacon must constantly challenge comparison between his inelegant and mechanical writing and the chaste and dainty work of the plays.

He would have made poets to order after a scientific method. He says, "Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtile; natural philosophy, deep, moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend; studies become habits; nay, there is no stand or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies, like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises; bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like; so, if a man's wits be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstration, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are 'splitters of hairs.' If he be not apt to beat over matters and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study lawyers' cases; so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt."

Those who think Shakespeare could not have written the plays because he had no great school learning ought to be in love with Bacon's idea of tinkering the human mind, of patching up its defects and doctoring its ailments; for the probability of his having written the plays, in their judgment, rests entirely upon his erudition. They credit him with the poetic gift upon the

same ground that he professes to be able to manufacture it.

Upon the same theory an artist might be fashioned, or a composer or a genius of any kind. You must simply discover what he lacks, and as "there is no stand or impediment that may not be wrought out by fit studies," it becomes only a question of what peculiar kind of cramming the defective poet needs. If some aged and discolored college archives could be discovered which would show that Shakespeare had passed a few terms in classic studies, it would be a satisfaction to those who cannot believe in his authorship because they do not know where he learned to read, but it would add nothing of importance. The beauty of his creations is in their simplicity, naturalness and originality,—things which such studies might have dimmed, but could not have brightened.

In the introduction to Bacon's Essays by Mr. Joseph Devey, M.A., he says, "To rid himself (Bacon) of embarrassment so irksome to men of genius, he resolved to make a bold attempt to retrieve his affairs by marriage. Lady Hatton, the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Cecil and early relict of the son of Chancellor Hatton, was the beauty at whose shrine Bacon ventured to offer up his first vows. (Macaulay says, 'The eccentric manners and violent temper of this woman made her a disgrace and torment to her connections.') But the rich widow had unfortunately possessed herself of a copy of Bacon's Essays, and finding therein love described as an ignoble passion, fit only for base and petulant natures, she ascribed his professions of attach-

ment rather to her money than her person, and rejected his suit. The disappointment was the more severely felt, as the young lady capitulated to a rival, his own antagonist, Sir Edward Coke, a crabbed old lawyer with six children and stricken with infirmities."

BACON'S ESSAY ON LOVE.

"The stage is more beholding to love than the life of man; for as to the stage, love is ever a matter of comedies and now and then of tragedies, but in life it doth much mischief, sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury. You may observe that amongst all the great and worthy persons (whereof the memory remaineth either ancient or recent) there is not one that has been transported to the mad degree of love, which shows that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion. You must except, nevertheless, Marcus Antonius, the half-partner of the empire of Rome, and Appius Claudius, the decemvir and law-giver, whereof the former was indeed a voluptuous man and inordinate, but the latter was an austere and wise man; and therefore it seems (though rarely) that love can find entrance, not only into an open heart, but also into a heart well fortified, if watch be not well kept. It is a poor saying of Epicurus, 'We are a sufficient theme of contemplation, the one for the other,' as if a man made for the contemplation of the heavens and all noble objects, should do nothing but kneel before a little idol and make himself subject, though not of the mouth (as beasts are), yet of the eye, which was given him for higher purposes. It is a strange thing to note

the excess of this passion and how it braves the nature and value of things by this, that the speaking in hyperbole is comely in nothing but in love, neither is it merely in the phrase; for whereas it hath been well said, 'That the arch flatterer, with whom all the petty flatterers have intelligence, is a man's self,' certainly the lover is more; for there never was a proud man thought so absurdly well of himself, as the lover doth of the person loved, and therefore it was well said, 'That it is impossible to love and be wise.' Neither doth this weakness appear to others only and not to the party loved, but the loved one most of all, except the love be reciprocal, for it is a true rule that love is ever rewarded either with the reciprocal, or with an inward and secret contempt; by how much the more men ought to beware of this passion, which loseth not only other things, but itself. As for the other losses, the poet's relation doth well figure them: 'That he that preferred Helena, quitted the gifts of Juno and Pallas; for whosoever esteemeth too much of amorous affection, quitteth both riches and wisdom. This passion hath its floods in the very times of weakness, which are great prosperity and great adversity, though this latter hath been less observed, both which tonics kindle love and make it more fervent, and therefore show it to be the child of folly. They do best, who, if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter, and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life; for if it check once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes, and maketh men that they can nowise be true to their own ends. I know not how, but martial men are given to love; I

think it is but as they are given to wine, for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures. There is in man's nature a secret inclination and motion towards love of others, which, if it be not spent upon some one or a few, doth naturally spread itself towards many, and maketh men become humane and charitable, as is seen sometimes in friars. Nuptial love maketh mankind, friendly love perfecteth it, but wanton love corrupteth and embaseth it."

Bacon afterwards married a rich alderman's daughter, who probably had not read his sentiments on the "child of folly." In order to help his suit he petitioned Cecil that he might be knighted, which was done along with a batch of about three hundred others. He had no children, and his wife was divorced after his disgrace.

I imagine not many people will need more than to read his Essay on Love, to dismiss any thought of his having written any of Shakespeare's plays, where "the lover thinks so absurdly well of the party loved."

It is said that all the world is in love with a lover, but Bacon is an exception. He is much vexed with a lover. To him love is a fury or a siren, and does much mischief. It is of more service to comedy than to life. It is a weakness. Only two great persons are known to have been transported to its "mad degree." Great persons and great business do not allow it entrance. It is altogether beneath the dignity of great and worthy men, who were made to contemplate the heavens, to kneel before a little idol and make themselves subjects of the eye, which was given them for higher purposes. Shakespeare had no thought of that kind, and his plays

are full of the little idols who are perfectly bewitched by the eyes of mortals, who never seem to suspect that they were intended purely for astronomical study.

"Tell me, where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply,

It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell."

—*Merchant of Venice.*

"Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks;
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in the spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright,
That birds would sing, and think it were not night."

—*Romeo and Juliet.*

"Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheathed their light,
And, canopied in darkness, sweetly lay
Till they might open to adorn the day."—*Lucrece.*

The *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in utter disregard of Bacon's disapproval, makes the whole plot of the story turn upon the witchery of the fairy's touch to mortal eyes.

"*Oberon*.—And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies."

"*Oberon*.—What thou seest when thou dost wake,
 Do it for thy true love take;
 Love, and languish for his sake;
 Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
 Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
 In thy eye that shall appear
 When thou wak'st, it is thy dear;
 Wake when some vile thing is near."

"*Puck*.—Through the forest I have gone,
 But Athenian found I none,
 On whose eyes I might approve
 This flower's force in stirring love.
 Night and silence— Who is here?
 Weeds of Athens he doth wear;
 This is he, my master said,
 Despised the Athenian maid;
 And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
 On the dank and dirty ground.
 Pretty soul, she durst not lie
 Near this lack-love, kill-courtesy.
 Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
 All the power this charm doth owe.
 When thou wak'st, let love forbid
 Sleep his seat on thy eyelid;
 So awake when I am gone,
 For I must now to Oberon."

This does not suggest any of the dangerous things that may befall those who admit love. It even sounds as though the one thing that mortals most delight in were that which they cannot have and "be wise."

There perhaps never was a lover who thought as "absurdly well" of the "*party* loved" as Romeo. Imagine Juliet as a "*party*"! Bacon could never have had any patience with such folly as Romeo's hyperbole.

Carlisle said that "Bacon could no more have written Hamlet than he could have made this planet." It is even more impossible to imagine him as the author of *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

A man who could see nothing but "childish" curiosity in the figures of a dance, who considered love the "child of folly," and "works of imagination" a culpable loss of time, must sit like a bat at such a spectacle as the *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

"The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name."

There is not a hint or suggestion in all that he has written, that any thought such as the elfish and fairy spirit in which this play abounds ever even caught his attention; nor of the weird conceits of the witches in *Macbeth*. In my estimation of the business of his life, it seems to me that the playful witchery and airiness of this inimitable piece of beauty and mirth would seem to him the veriest nonsense to interrupt his "serious observations."

Bacon has written an *Essay on Cupid*, which gives an idea of his fancy. He entitles it

"CUPID OR ATOM, EXPLAINED OF THE CORPUSCULAR
PHILOSOPHY."

"Love seems to be the appetite or incentive of the primitive matter; or, to speak more distinctly, the natural motion or moving principle of the original corpuseles or atoms, this being the most ancient and

only power that made and wrought all things out of matter.

"Cupid is elegantly drawn as a perpetual child, for compounds are larger things, and have their periods of age; but the first seeds or atoms of bodies are small, and remain in perpetual infant state.

"He is again justly represented naked; as all compounds may properly be said to be dressed and clothed, or to assume a personage, whence nothing remains truly naked but the original particle of things.

"The last attribute of Cupid is archery, viz., a virtue or power of operating at a distance, for everything that operates at a distance may seem, as it were, to dart or shoot with arrows. And whoever allows of atoms and vacuity, necessarily supposes that the virtue of atoms operates at a distance; for without this operation no motion could be excited, on account of the vacuum interposing, but all things would remain sluggish and unmoved."

As Shakespeare had not Bacon's learning, it is to be hoped that he did not know of the corpuscular nature of Puck, nor that he was not a compound but fortunately was a particle of things, otherwise he would have been obliged to wear clothes. It is fortunate also that he did not know of the dangers that beset Puck in the shape of the "vacuum interposing," which might in some blundering way have made Puck sluggish and bedragged him, so to speak.

Bacon's essay on the scientific origin of Cupid and Shakespeare's personification of Cupid are as fair examples of the difference in the natures of the two men

as can be drawn. The more one learns of Bacon's attainments, his study and investigation, the better satisfied one becomes that Shakespeare was without them. What a horrid thing it would have been for Shakespeare to have his fancy clouded by a knowledge that the little sprite was a corpuscle, and that some atmospheric calamity might befall him that would instantly render him quite torpid!

We can find something of the idea of Puck—

“I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes,”

in Bacon, but it is not expressed in the same way. He is speaking “drawingly” of hope, as nearly as I can make out, and he says, “Nor should we neglect to mention the prophecy of Daniel, of the last days of the world, ‘Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,’ thus plainly hinting and suggesting that fate (which is providence) would cause the complete circuit of the globe (now accomplished or at least going forward by means of so many distant voyages) and the increase of learning to happen at the same epoch.” This is not exactly as Puck expresses it, but it is absolute collision compared to some instances cited in support of the Baconite theory.

The charm of all the elfish world is its unreality. Bacon would destroy all of that and account for its existence upon scientific principles. He would never be satisfied with a Cupid that he could not dissect. In nothing else is he so far from Shakespeare as in Shakespeare's fairyland. These airy visions cannot find any

place in his philosophy. The truant and intangible nature of the shadowy creatures could never dwell in the atmosphere of his corpuscles. The man who can speak of Cupid as "the appetite or incentive of the primitive matter" could not follow him through the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is not the kind of a play that a man would write who took a scientific or anatomical view of Cupid, or who regarded love as the "child of folly," or whose description of love would frighten away his sweetheart. He is the only poet (?) in history who despises love, and the only one certainly whose love-song scared away a fortune and a wife, and she, too, a widow with no uncertain temper.

CHAPTER VI.

The New Atlantis—Bacon's sketch of Queen Elizabeth—His censure of fictions of the imagination—His resolve to publish all his writings—Time occupied in writing the plays—The Sonnets—Cause of Queen Elizabeth's dislike of Bacon—His debts.

THE only thing that approaches a sketch of an imaginary female character, which I have found in Bacon's works, is in the *New Atlantis*, and she is out of sight in a loft, and does not say anything. The *New Atlantis* is, I think, his only attempt at fiction. He did not finish it! Rawley says, "His desire of collecting the natural history diverted him, which he preferred many

degrees before it." It is not a love story. The distinguishing characteristic of the hero is a large family and great wisdom ; but as "wise men never admit love lest it may trouble their fortunes and make them that they can in nowise be true to their own ends," these clashing elements do not disturb the solemnity of Bacon's romance ; "as for masculine love they have no touch of it." The story is a grave and serious study. It opens about twenty years after the ascension, with a miracle that proves to be a floating column of light. It is far out at sea, and the eddies set off from it in every direction, so that boats cannot approach, until one of the faithful in one of the boats which has been paddled out to investigate the illumination bethinks himself to make a "confession of faith that the thing which we now see before us is thy finger, and a true miracle." Then, *that one boat* is no longer repelled from the marvellous sight, but is unbound and suffers itself to be rowed toward it, whereupon this immense structure, some miles high, with a resplendent cross upon it, explodes into a firmament of stars and disappears, leaving only a little ark floating close at hand, which upon being taken in tow is found to contain a letter and a volume embracing all the canonical books, and the first copies of some other books which (the author admits) were not written at that time ; in fact, not before some centuries later.

The letter explains the books, and has miraculous power. Hebrews, Persians and Indians can read it alike as if printed in their own language ; and "thus the land was saved from infidelity. Thereafter none

but Christians were allowed to land upon the island where these people dwelt."

There is no other form of narrative as cheap and unimaginative as the miraculous. It hesitates at no degree of improbability. It sets all natural laws and human experience at defiance. Absurdity is not an obstacle, and originality not a requisite. If one has not invention to plan the opening of a story, or a reasonable ground for a theory, he can begin with a dream, or an apparition, or a column of light or some astronomical freak, and get his tale launched in that way; but it denotes a dearth of imagination and is barren of originality. He simply needs to talk about it in an awestruck and sanctimonious way; and though he may be of the slipperiest clay himself, his supposed faith in the supernatural will be accepted for spirituality. The commonplace accessories of all such accounts destroy the intended effect.

The Mormon birth or resuscitation or excavation of their theology shows to what extent people will attempt to join the material with the spiritual. The Mormons claim that the plates from which the Book of Mormon was printed were delivered to Mr. Joseph Smith, Jr., by an angel, September 22, 1827, in the woods in New York state, where they had been buried fourteen hundred years. A key was also there, to explain the plates, described in this wise: "With the records was found a curious instrument, called by the ancients the Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones, clear as crystal, set in two rims of bow. This was used in ancient times by people called seers. It was an in-

strument by the use of which they received revelation of things past or future." Then, after Mr. Joseph Smith, Jr., received the plates, he had considerable trouble to remove them, for this Mormon angel seems to have felt no further responsibility about them; and Mr. Smith finally carted them away *concealed in a barrel of beans*, he being overhauled by constables with search-warrants, and pursued by ruffians with shot-guns and clubs. That is all set forth with just as much solemnity as Bacon's birth of the community of Solomon's House.

The plot or plan of the New Atlantis seems to be an enumeration of the things *we have*. The one thing which he mentions that we *have not* is masculine love, and the absence of that is regarded as one of the community's blessings. Among the things specified which "we have" are "all sorts of beasts and birds which we use for dissection and trials, wherein we find many strange effects; as continuing life in them though divers parts, which others account vital, be perished and taken forth; resuscitating of some that seem dead in appearance, and the like. We try poisons and other medicines upon them, as well of surgery as physic. We dwarf them. We make a number of serpents, worms, flies, fishes, of putrefaction, etc. [Some of the diversions of these ideal people are too disgusting to copy.] We try experiments in burying some in one kind of earth, some in another, some in water. We also generate bodies in the air, as frogs, flies and divers others."

This story of the New Atlantis is simply an existence

where the people have everything that the author conceives to be desirable. There is no theatre! There are no plays! Shakespeare would have had no occupation there. I doubt if he would have been permitted to land, and I am convinced he would not have wished to.

This is a description of the entry of one of the fathers of Solomon's House: "The day being come, he made his entry. He was a man of middle stature and age, comely of person, and had an aspect as if he pitied men. He was clothed in a robe of fine black cloth, with wide sleeves and a cape. His undergarment was of excellent white linen down to the foot, girt with a girdle of the same; and a sindon or tippet of the same about his neck. He had gloves that were canvas and set with stone, and shoes of peach-colored velvet. His neck was bare to the shoulders. His hat was like a helmet or Spanish montera, and his locks curled below it decently. They were of color brown. His beard was cut round, and of the same color with his hair, somewhat lighter. He was carried in a rich chariot, without wheels, litter-wise, with two horses at each end, richly trapped in blue velvet embroidered, and two footmen on either side in the like attire. The chariot was all of cedar, gilt, and adorned with crystal, save that the fore end had panels of sapphires set in borders of gold, and the hinder end the like of emeralds of the Peru color. There was also a sun of gold, radiant upon the top, in the midst; and on the top before a small cherub of gold, with wings displayed. The chariot was covered with cloth of gold tissued upon blue. He had before him fifty attendants, young men all, in

white satin loose coats up to the middle leg, and stocking of white silk, and shoes of blue velvet, and hats of blue velvet, with fine plumes of divers colors set round like hat bands. Next before the chariot went two men bareheaded, in linen garments down to the foot, girt, and shoes of blue velvet, who carried, the one a crosier, the other a pastoral staff, like a sheep-hook, neither of them of metal, but the crosier of balm-wood, the pastoral staff of cedar. Horsemen he had none, neither before nor behind his chariot, as it seemeth to avoid all tumult and trouble. Behind his chariot went all the officers and principals of the companies of the city. He sat alone upon cushions of a kind of excellent plush, blue, and under his foot curious carpets of silk of divers colors, like the Persian, but far finer. He held up his bare hand as he went, as blessing the people, but in silence. The street was wonderfully well kept, so that there never was any army had their men stand in better battle array than the people stood. The windows likewise were not crowded, but every one stood in them as if they had been placed."

This is a description of the stately entrance of one of the wise men of this ideal community. It gives Bacon's highest conception of what constitutes an imposing pageant and the homage of the people to one of their rulers. Whether there is anything Shakespearean in the description or in the spirit of the ceremony is a matter of individual judgment. It does not capture my fancy to imagine this dignitary "with an aspect as though he pitied men," with his bare neck and shoulders and his hair curling decently beneath his helmet,

shod in peach-colored velvet shoes, resting on "carpet like Persian, only far finer."

As he says in his *Essay on Masques*, he describes "the things which catch the sense." In everything the absence of sentiment and the sway of the material is apparent. His theme, in this description of a perfect house, is the creature comforts and the conveniences that the people enjoy. One of the details is, "So for meats, we have some of them so beaten and made tender and mortified, yet without all corrupting, as a weak heat of the stomach will turn into good chylus."

He fills pages with catalogues of what "we have." "We have towers half a mile high on mountains, that raise them at least three miles high. We use them for isolation, refrigeration, conservation. We use them to observe fiery meteors, etc., and we have hermits dwelling there whom we instruct what to observe.

"We have great fresh lakes and salt lakes, fish-fowl cataracts, which serve for motors, also engines.

"We have artificial wells, fountains, tinted upon vitriol, sulphur, steel, brass, lead, nitre and other minerals; wells for infusions such as 'water of paradise' for the prolongation of life. We have spacious houses to imitate thunder, lightning, meteors, snow and hail.

"We have chambers of health for the cure of diseases, and baths for the same purpose.

"We have orchards, gardens, trees, herbs, berries, 'all kinds of drinks,' besides vineyards, grafting, inoculation, wild trees and fruit trees. Their fruit is larger and sweeter than its nature, its smell, taste and color is superior, and it has medicinal uses.

“We raise plants without seeds, and we can turn one plant or tree into another. We have parks and enclosures for beasts and birds, upon which we practice vivisection. We have pools for fishes for the purpose of like experiments.

“We have brew-houses, bake-houses and kitchens, divers drinks, breads and meats, rare and of special effects. Wines of grapes, and drinks of other juice, of fruits, of grains, and of roots, and of mixtures with honey, sugar and manna, and fruits dried and decocted, also of tears, or woundings of trees, and of the pulp of canes, and these drinks are of several ages, some to the age or last of at least forty years.

“We have drinks also brewed with several herbs and roots and spices, yea, with several fleshs, and white meats; whereof some of the drinks are such, as they are in effect meat and drink both, so that divers, especially in age, do desire to live with them, with little or no meat or bread. And above all, we strive to have drinks of extreme thin parts, to insinuate into the body and yet without all biting, sharpness or fretting; inso-much as some of them put upon the back of your hand will, with a little stay, pass through to the palm, and yet taste mild to the mouth. We also ripen waters until they become nourishing.

“Breads we have of several grains, roots and kernels; yea, and some of flesh and fish dried, with divers kinds of leavenings and seasonings. So for meats, we have some of them so beaten and made tender and mortified, yet without all corrupting, as a weak heat of the stomach will turn them into good chylus.

"We have dispensatories or shops of medicine, and drugs in immense variety. We have distillations, preparations, separations and percolations.

"We have papers, linens, silks, tissues, feathers and dyes.

"We have fertilizers [too offensive to describe]. We have furnaces, magnifying-glasses, loadstones.

"We have echo-houses, musical instruments, bells, gunpowder, fireworks."

If the best marketing, the finest and most suitable clothing, perfect sanitary plumbing, mineral baths, all kinds of drinks, medicines and drugs, and vivisection as a scientific pastime, can make a people happy, then Bacon has described a Utopia.

But lest it may appear that the people have no amusements except trying poisons upon the brute creation, I will copy the description of the feast which they celebrate. This feast is one of the principal features of the romance. It reads: "One day there were two of our company bidden to a feast of the family, as they call it, a most natural, pious and reverend custom it is, showing that nation to be compounded of all goodness. This is the manner of it: it is granted to any man, that shall live to see thirty persons, descended of his body, alive together and all above three years old, to make this feast, which is done at the cost of the state. The father of the family, whom they call the tirsan, two days before the feast taketh to him three of such friends as he liketh to choose, and is assisted also by the governor of the city or place where the feast is celebrated, and all the persons of the family of both sexes are summoned

to attend him. These two days the tirsan sitteth in consultation concerning the good estate of the family. There, if there be any discord or suits between any of the family, they are compounded and appeased; there, if any of the family be distressed or decayed, order is taken for their relief and competent means to live; there, if any be subject to vice or to take ill courses, they are reprovèd and censured. So likewise direction is given touching marriage and the course of life which any of them should take, with divers other the like orders and advices. The governor assisteth to the end to put in execution by his public authority the decrees and orders of the tirsan, if they should be disobeyed, though that seldom needeth, such reverence and obedience they give to the order of nature. The tirsan doth then ever choose one man from amongst his sons to live in house with him, who is called ever after 'the son of the vine.' The reason will hereafter appear. On the feast day the father or tirsan cometh forth after divine service into a large room where the feast is celebrated, which room hath a half-pace (platform) at the upper end. Against the wall in the middle of the platform is a chair placed for him with a table and a carpet before it. Over the chair is a state made round or oval, and it is of ivy somewhat whiter than ours. . . .

"The tirsan cometh forth with all his generation or lineage, the males before him and the females following him.

"And if there be a mother from whose body the whole lineage is descended, there is a traverse placed in a loft above on the right hand of the chair, with a pri-

vate door, and a carved window of glass, leaded with gold and blue, where she sitteth but is not seen.

“When the tirsan is come forth, he sitteth down in the chair, and all the lineage place themselves against the wall, both at his back and upon the sides of the platform, in order of their years, without difference of sex, and stand upon their feet. When he is set, the room being always full of company, but well kept, and without disorder, after some pause there cometh in from the lower end of the room a taratan, which is as much as an herald, and on either side of him two young lads, whereof one carrieth a scroll of their shining yellow parchment, and the other a cluster of grapes of gold, with a long foot or stalk; the herald and children are clothed with mantles of sea-water green satin, but the herald’s mantle is streamered with gold and hath a train. Then the herald with three courtesies, or rather inclinations, cometh up as far as the platform and there first taketh into his hand the scroll.

“This scroll is the king’s charter, containing gift of revenue, and many privileges, exemptions and points of honor granted to the father of the family; and it is ever styled and directed to such an one, our well-beloved friend and creditor, which is a proper title only in this case; for they say, the king is debtor to no man, but for propagation of his subjects. The seal set to the king’s charter is the king’s image, embossed or mounted in gold. This charter the herald readeth aloud, and while it is read, the father or tirsan standeth up, supported by two of his sons, such as he chooseth. Then the herald mounteth the platform and delivereth the charter into

his hand, at which there is an acclamation, by all that are present, in their language, which is thus much: Happy are the people of Bensalem. Then the herald taketh into his hand from the other child the cluster of grapes which is of gold, both the stalk and the grapes, but the grapes are daintily enamelled; and if the males of the family be the greater number, the grapes are enamelled purple, with a little sun set on the top; if the females, then they are enamelled unto a greenish yellow, with a crescent on the top. The grapes are in number as many as there are descendants of the family. This golden cluster the herald delivereth also to the tirsan, who presently delivereth it over to that son that he had formerly chosen to be in house with him, who beareth it before his father as an ensign of honor when he goeth in public ever after; and is thereupon called the son of the vine.

“After this ceremony ended, the father or tirsan retireth, and after some time cometh forth again to dinner, where he sitteth alone under the state as before, and none of his descendants sit with him of what degree or dignity soever, except he be of Solomon’s House.

“He is served only by his own children such as are male, who perform to him all service of the table upon the knee, and all the women only stand about him, leaning against the wall. The room below his platform hath tables on the sides for the guests that are bidden, who are served with great and comely order; and toward the end of the dinner, which in the greatest feasts with them lasteth never more than an hour and a half, there is a hymn sung, varied according to the invention of

him that composed it, for they have excellent poetry, but the subject of it is always the praise of Adam and Noah and Abraham, whereof the former two peopled the world, and the last was the father of the faithful.

“Dinner being done the tirsan retireth again, and having withdrawn himself alone into a place where he maketh some private prayers, he cometh forth the third time to give the blessing with all his descendants about him as at the first.

“Then the tirsan blesses each one individually with a set phrase—‘Son or daughter of Bensalem, thy father saith it, the man by whom thou hast breath and life speaketh the word. Sons, it is well with you that you are born,’ etc.”

It is reasonable to suppose that Bacon in imagination performed the part of the tirsan. It describes a scene and a figure suited to his ambition and aspiration. He had an overpowering desire to be wise or to be so regarded, and his fancy always leans to the grave and venerable. This story is told simply as a picture of Bacon’s idea of an ideal existence.

I have read praises of this paper, but I can only see in it the unctuous vulgarity of a nature fond of show, ceremony, parade, homage and incense, and barren of sentiment, poetry, grace and spirituality.

There is not the slightest evidence that this feast (?) “shows the state to be compounded of all goodness;” in fact it is not a feast at all, but only a *feed for the old tirsan*, and the occasion of it is too vulgar to be hidden by the pretence of religious fervor. Such a ceremony could only be imagined by a man of earthy tastes who

was fond of picturing himself the object of adulation, awe and worship. It could have no other purpose. If one can forget its selfishness and its disgusting features it may become amusing, but it has nothing in it worthy of serious thought.

It could not be enjoyable to any one but the old tirsan, and only one who expected to play the tirsan would have written it; and it is most unjust to the woman who is stuck away in the loft. As the party is the reward for the successful rearing of a numerous brood, one naturally resents the banishment of the member of the family whose claims to recognition must be immensely greater than those of the old tirsan. It is a very modest meal for a state to set forth which has such abundance of every conceivable thing to eat and drink; and the neighbors seem to partake in a stealthy and timid way at the side tables only, while the lineage do not appear to get any of the refreshments at all. *They* do not even have seats. In fact, the company seems to be invited to see the host eat. It may be that the progeny of this old man are stupid enough to be lost in admiration of their progenitor, but it is more likely that they regard him as a curiosity, and that only the presence of the policeman (governor) restrains them from poking fun at him. Some of them may be dull enough to enjoy the spectacle of "him from whom they have life and breath" sitting at a table alone, with his back to them, taking his food, served by his sons on their knees; but the "decayed" ones must with "hearts distrusting ask if this be joy," and the little three-year-old tots down at the far end of the line can hardly be

expected to appreciate the nature of the celebration, or to look with any great degree of satisfaction or patience upon the morsels that disappear at the solitary repast; and I should think they might be sadly in need of the mother's care, who is secreted above where she may peep through a window to see the father of her children get his diploma and gorge himself for ninety minutes.

She seems to be in disgrace. She gets none of the viands, and does not mingle with the company. If she is the mother of the *whole thirty*, she may sit in this concealment and spy through the glass at her sons holding up their aged father, while the herald reads the charter, and she may see the lineage ranged along the wall "in the order of their years," and she may see her sons ply the old man with the food that the state has provided; but if some other mother may have contributed a share of the thirty pledges, there seems to be no provision for her whatever, and the presumption is that she could not even have a hiding-place to peep at what is going on. If she were a widow and the lineage fulfilled the requirement of the ordinance, and were she ever so needy, the state could not provide the feast (?), for it is an honor and a debt that the state pays only to the tirsan.

If there is anything in this story that suggests the writer of Shakespeare's plays, then I have aided the Baconite theory in making such lengthy extracts from it. It is, I think, Bacon's one venture in the realm of narrative, and he had not sufficient fondness for the subject to finish it. Rawley says, "He preferred the

natural history many degrees before it," and therefore he abandoned it. It is so much like his *Natural History* that one can hardly realize his distaste for it on that ground. If a story that contains a laboratory, dissecting-room, dye-houses, observatories, and in which they manufacture thunder, lightning and composts, and generate frogs, flies and worms, and in which all the affairs are conducted upon scientific principles, does not satisfy an author's longing in such respects, what must be thought of an attempt to attribute to him such works as the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado*, etc.?

Lest some readers may think Bacon had some idea of adding amusements to this story, and that there was a possibility of the "child of folly" finally finding entrance, I may say that the part yet to be added was the legal department. His historians say he intended to frame a code of laws for Solomon's House. If the treatment of the mother of the tirsan's children and a law they had respecting marriage are to speak for him as a law-giver, then the world has lost nothing by the unfinished construction of Solomon's House. This law read thus: "Marriage without consent of parents they do not make void, but they mulct it in the inheritors, for the children of such marriages are not admitted to inherit above a third part of their parents' inheritance."

The same disposition to see only the gross and material side of his subject appears in all his writings. Even in his history of Queen Elizabeth, instead of a description of her wit, tastes, habits, disposition and personal appearance, and such things as have a living

interest for the mass of people, his chief stress is laid upon her sickness. "In the distemper of the queen there was nothing shocking, nothing presaging, nothing unbecoming of human nature. She was not desirous of life, nor impatient under sickness, nor racked with pain. She had no dire or disagreeable symptom, but all things were of that kind as argued rather the frailty than the corruption or disgrace of nature. Being emaciated by an extreme dryness of body and the cares that attend a crown, and never refreshed with wine or with a full and plentiful diet, she was a few days before her death struck with a dead palsy."

The peculiarities and characteristics of the queen who boxed her courtier's ears, and danced measures and galliards for her Italian guest when she was nearly seventy, to show that she was not as old as people would have her, and who "danced so high and composedly," did not interest him, and his sketch was chiefly a diagnosis of her.

The time that Bacon would have required for writing the plays seems to have received very little attention from his admirers. It is admitted even by them that no evidence of his authorship exists. His historians say he was constantly attended by a chaplain and a secretary. It would have been an impossible task to do such an amount of work and conceal all traces and evidences of it from persons so closely connected with him, and especially considering the care bestowed upon his manuscripts and the care with which they were preserved.

Bacon "entered upon the study of the law when he was

twenty, and rarely suffered either amusement or literature to disturb the tenor of his professional duties for ten or eleven years" (Devey). This brings him to 1591; and from that time forth his life was in full public view.

He felicitates himself, in his *Novum Organum*, on the amount of work he has done under disadvantages, and holds himself up as an example to others in this respect; and not only does not refer to any other writing, but gives a side thrust at learning that is not "sound;" the same censure that he applied to stage acting in his essays. He says, Book I., Aphorism CXI., "Nor should we omit to mention another ground of hope. Let men only consider (if they will) their infinite expenditure of talent, time and fortune, in matters and studies of far inferior importance and value; a small proportion of which applied to sound and solid learning, would be sufficient to overcome every difficulty. And we have thought right to add this observation, because we candidly own that such a collection of natural and experimental history as we have traced in our mind, and as really necessary, is a great and as it were royal work, requiring much labor and expense."

CXII. "The particular phenomena of the arts and nature are in reality but as a handful when compared with the *fictions of the imagination, removed and separated from the evidence of facts*. The termination of our method is clear, and as I had almost said, near at hand; *the other admits of no termination, but only of infinite confusion*. For men have hitherto dwelt but little or rather only slightly touched upon experience, whilst

they have wasted much time on theories and the fictions of the imagination." (The italics are mine.)

CXIII. "We think some ground of hope is afforded by our own example, which is not mentioned for the sake of boasting, but as a useful remark. Let those who distrust their own powers observe myself, one who have amongst my contemporaries been the most engaged in public business, who am not very strong in health (which causes a great loss of time), and am the first explorer of this course, following the guidance of none, nor even communicating my thoughts to a single individual; yet having once firmly entered in the right way, and submitting the powers of my mind to things, I have somewhat advanced (as I make bold to think) that matter I now treat of. Then let others consider what may be hoped from men who enjoy abundant leisure, from united labors," etc.

CXVI. "We offer no universal or complete theory. The time does not yet appear to us to have arrived, and we entertain no hope of our life being prolonged to the completion to the sixth part of the Instauration," etc.

Bacon's earnestness in that work is undeniable, whatever the ambition may have been. The tone and phraseology is straightforward and unlike the affectation and pedantry of his essays. He speaks here of his *Novum Organum* as solid and sound learning, and deprecates the time, talent and fortune that "people waste upon studies of *far inferior value and importance, viz., works of fiction and the imagination, which admit of no termination and only of confusion.*" In order to encourage

others he reminds them of how much he has done himself, although engrossed in public business and having lost much time from delicate health, and he fears he may not live to finish a part of his work "which is destined for philosophy discovered by the interpretation of nature."

In another place he says, "I determined to publish whatever I found time to perfect. Nor is this the haste of ambition, but anxiety that if I should die there might remain behind me some outline and determination of the matter my mind has embraced," etc.

This sentence, written by himself, that he determined to publish whatever he had time to perfect, sounds to me very like an unconscious disclaimer to any title to the Shakespeare plays.

As Ben Jonson, Herbert and Playfair assisted Bacon in his translations, it is quite probable that Bacon's regrets at the time, talent and money wasted on works of fiction and imagination were directed at him (Jonson).

Bacon's metaphysical, speculative and legal works fully entitle him to all the credit which he claims for himself as a man of most industrious habit. Shakespeare earned the same reputation. Webster speaks of his "happy, copious industry." Would it not then be beyond the reach of possibility that Bacon would cite his published works as the evidence of a life-time of diligent labor, and express a hope and a doubt as to being able to finish his work before his death, speaking regretfully of the time he had been obliged to lose on account of indifferent health, adding his determination to publish

everything he had time to perfect, and begrudging the time, talent and fortunes expended by others upon works of imagination, "which only led to confusion," if he, in addition to his published works, was the author of works of imagination fully equal in size to everything he claimed, his legal works perhaps excepted? It must be borne in mind that, although Bacon was sixty-six years of age when he died, the writing of the plays did not extend over all that time; in fact, the plays (thirty-seven in number) and the sonnets and poems were written within about eighteen years. How much time does any one think the writer of those plays had for other work? and how does any one suppose such an immense accomplishment could be performed secretly?

If Bacon had possessed any dramatic ability, certainly Ben Jonson would have known it, and he is the one whom it would be reasonable to suppose Bacon would have chosen as the most suitable to put the plays on the stage. Between them there certainly was some bond of literary sympathy. Jonson admired Bacon as a debater, and also assisted him with his Latin translations. Bacon evidently had no sympathy with Jonson's dramatic taste and profession; but if it had been otherwise, and Bacon had secretly been interested in such "toys" and feared to have it known, the most natural thing would have been for him to take Jonson into his confidence and profit by his connection with the stage and the court masques.

I cannot imagine how it can be urged that at any time it would have impaired Bacon's political aspirations to be known as the author of the sonnets or his-

torical plays. Can any one suppose that Queen Elizabeth or any of the persons about the court would have found it derogatory to his character or dignity to have written the sonnets dedicated to Southampton, Essex's nearest friend? That was the kind of accomplishment that commanded high respect at that time. Raleigh, Sydney and Spenser are examples. The profession of actor was held in low esteem, but poetry was highly prized. Authorship, learning and literature were the general ambition. In order to sustain the Baconite theory, it is necessary to falsify the spirit of the time and to invest the people with a sentiment that did not exist. Probably nothing else could have advanced Bacon in the favor of Queen Elizabeth as much as just such writings as the sonnets. She cared nothing for Bacon. Essex petitioned her in vain for years for an appointment for him, "while the latter hung about the court." Finally it annoyed her so much that she told him on one occasion to "go to bed if he could talk of nothing but Bacon." Then he, in concert with Bacon, adopted the plan of disparaging other applicants. When Bacon was arrested for a debt of £300 to a goldsmith, he tried to get her to pay it, and wanted to retaliate upon his creditor by urging that, as he was on business for her majesty at the Tower at the time, it was a misdemeanor in the man to arrest him. The queen on one occasion gave Essex £5000 worth of cochineal, and also cancelled bonds of immense amount for him, and it is said paid £20,000 of his debts at one time; but she did not heed Bacon's appeal for £300, and allowed him to lie in a spunging-house for a paltry

debt, and at one time she forbade him to enter the court. In the succeeding reign of James I., when most of the plays were on the stage, Bacon rose to political eminence, but he never overcame Queen Elizabeth's dislike. As so much is made of his attainments, there may be an impression that he held some honorable place under the queen, which he feared to jeopard. That is not true. The likelihood is that the legal and metaphysical bent of his mind and his servility and prosy homilies were the real obstacles. His Essay on Love was a thousand times more fatal to his connection with the court of Elizabeth than any dramatic genius could be. The "child of folly" was always a welcome guest there, and there were no courtiers who used their eyes only for the "study of the heavens."

It is much more likely that the utter absence of the sentiment of the plays, poems and sonnets of Shakespeare was the cause of Queen Elizabeth's dislike of him, than that such productions would have hurt his standing at court. She was not the woman to admire his Essay on Love any more than the widow Hatton, or to be drawn to a man who could treat of Cupid as a "corpuscle" and as "primitive matter," and to explain why he did not wear clothes. She employed him to write a justification of the execution of Essex and paid him £1200 for his services in that heartless proceeding; but as she grieved so terribly that the ring, that would probably have saved Essex's life, miscarried, it cannot be otherwise than that she thoroughly despised him (Bacon) for his part in the tragedy.

If the plays are claimed for Bacon, the sonnets must

be also. If it is admitted that Shakespeare wrote the sonnets, then the charge of illiteracy is refuted and his ability conceded, and the whole structure of the Baconites' myth is destroyed. The ingenious invention of a cause for concealment as a playwright does not apply to the sonnets, and it does not explain why, if Bacon had any poetic passion, he should not have contributed to the poetry of the day. A newspaper critic disbelieves in Shakespeare, partly because he did not publish his plays, because he did "not write prefaces for them," and because he did "not appoint Heminge and Condell his literary executors." That cannot be said of the sonnets, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. These he published over his own name, prefaced; and dedicated them to his friends.

"In the year 1593, Shakespeare printed his *Venus and Adonis*. His printer was Richard Field, son of Henry Field, tanner, of Stratford-on-Avon, who died in 1592. The inventory of his goods, attached to his will, had been taken by Shakespeare's father in that same year. Shakespeare's choice of a publisher was no doubt influenced by private connection" (Fleay).

If this writer uses it as an argument against Shakespeare that he did *not* do certain things in regard to the plays, by the same reasoning he must admit it as an argument in favor of his authorship that he *did* do these things in other writings; and if it is admitted that he wrote the sonnets, there is no argument left against his authorship of the plays, and no honest doubters.

Another striking contrast between these men is Shakespeare's thrift and Bacon's improvidence and debt. It

is too lengthy a story to give details of Bacon's life-long pecuniary troubles. He was always borrowing and always in debt. His mother and his brother Anthony were continually devising ways to pay his debts and keep his expenses within bounds. Those who care to get a glimpse into his disgraceful money transactions will find some account of them in Abbott's "Bacon and Essex." Macaulay says, "After his sentence was remitted the government allowed him a pension of £1200 a year. Unhappily he was fond of display and unused to pay minute attention to domestic affairs. He was not easily persuaded to give up any of the magnificence to which he had been accustomed in the time of his power and prosperity. No pressure of distress could induce him to part with the woods of Gorhambury. 'I will not,' he said, 'be stripped of my feathers.' He travelled with so splendid an equipage and so large a retinue that Prince Charles, who once fell in with him on the road, exclaimed with surprise, 'Well! do what we can, this man scorns to go out in snuff.'"

After reading Macaulay's picture of him, it is impossible to suppose him the writer of

"*Pol.*—Neither a borrower, nor a lender be:
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

Bacon certainly knew nothing of husbandry as here described.

CHAPTER VII.

Court favorites as patrons of the stage—Shakespeare's industry—Bacon's manuscript—Bacon's experiment with the fowl—Bacon's whereabouts when the plays were collected—Heminge and Condell—Globe Theatre—Adverse criticism upon Shakespeare—The classics—Bacon and the poem of *Lucrece*—Bacon's marriage—The *Promus*.

WHILE Shakespeare's detractors stand amazed that one of such obscure origin and supposed meagre opportunities should be credited with the masterpieces of English literature, they do not seem conscious of anything singular or unlikely in their theory of Bacon's choice of him as their presumed author. If Shakespeare was an "illiterate man, a ne'er-do-well, and a loungeur in tap-rooms," it is not complimentary to their idol's common sense that he should have selected him as a proper one to produce pieces which under such circumstances must cause surprise and incredulity. Neither the quality nor the amount of the work could have been imposed upon Shakespeare's companions by an ignorant or an idle man.

Consider how unfounded the assumption is that Bacon feared the effect of his appearance at court as a writer of plays. The Earl of Leicester, the favorite of Queen Elizabeth, was the patron of the company of players who visited Stratford in 1587, with whom Shakespeare is supposed to have left Stratford.

Essex (Bacon's benefactor and the queen's later favorite) wrote a masque. George Villiers, Duke of Buck-

ingham (James I.'s favorite, and whose servile tool Bacon was), wrote a play, the *Rehearsal*. If Bacon can possibly be supposed to have feared damage to his reputation by exposure in the same field of literature with the two men whose favor he begged and whose gifts he lived upon nearly all his life, then Ben Jonson and not Shakespeare was the man to stand between him and the disgrace of such genius. Nothing could be more absurd than to suppose that the court taste was for science or moral essays. Shakespeare's plays were incomparably better received at court than Bacon's writings. What Bacon needed to commend him at court was the exhibition of such gifts, and not the concealment of them.

I note one writer who does not believe that Shakespeare was not a member of the club which met at the Mermaid Tavern which was founded by Sir Walter Raleigh and attended by some celebrated men, although Shakespeare's name does not appear. It seems to me that the explanation of the little that is told of him may be found in his extraordinary industry. Indeed, the voluminous work he did in so short a time is an all-sufficient answer to the charge of his being an idler. He produced at the rate of two plays a year for seventeen years, besides his other pieces, and travelled with his company; and during all of the time the company had to contend with puritanical opposition, and were hindered by the plague. The amount of work he did not only attests the most unremitting study and application, but it verifies what Heminge and Condell said of him, "His mind and hand went together; what he

thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." Such work could not have been done laboriously. If he had been the roystering fellow that many persist in calling him, he would be far better known to-day as to his personality; but in those times people did not seek to discover "patient merit," and a man whose whole thought and interest were in his art might attract but little attention and have few friends outside of his profession. I think the slurs that are flung at his character are relics of the prejudice against the stage which has not passed away yet; and the doubt that pioneers the incredulity has its origin in an unwillingness that a man of such a calling shall "bear the palm alone." As the world grows to an appreciation of the moral worth of Shakespeare's philosophy there will be a recast of the judgment of what the stage has done for civilization.

If Shakespeare neglected to publish his plays, it may be accounted for by many suppositions. The plays were not entirely new. Many of them existed in some form before, and were rewritten by him. Some are thought to be only partly his. In the early part of his time it is said that Fletcher, Webster, Greene and Marlowe wrote in conjunction with him. The plots of some were old, and perhaps much of the framework was retained; and in some cases more than one story was woven into a play. A man of Shakespeare's "uprightness of dealing which argueth his honesty" might naturally be unwilling to collect the plays and assert his ownership of what must have seemed to be the common property of a company that had worked together

to put them upon the stage. This, of course, is conjecture, and is only worth whatever probability it may suggest ; but I can easily imagine a disturbing of the comradeship that might ensue from such a course, and this, the affection and good fellowship that existed between Shakespeare and his fellows would forbid.

It is a question also whether, if Shakespeare furnished the plays and was paid for them, *he* did not consider them the property of the theatre ; and there may have been many reasons why they were not published, chief of all the expense and doubtful return ; but as no one ever questioned Shakespeare's authorship, and no one ever claimed them, the fact of the neglect that attended them cannot be cited as casting any doubt upon the reputed author. Certainly they were all produced by his company and while he was its playwright, and every actor believed him the author.

How different this indifference about the manuscripts from Bacon's practice ! He treasured every scratch of his pen. The accounts of his petty expenses, the names of one hundred and fifty servants, a minute memorandum of the symptoms of a fit of indigestion, have been published. Even the notes, exclamations and apparently meaningless words that he jotted down for future use from the books that he had read, or plays he had seen,—at court probably,—and his random scribbling, have been preserved in the British Museum. He would not have allowed his writings to be handled as these plays were ; the printers rejecting, accepting and mutilating them according to their own judgment. Bacon's waste-basket was filled with pearls, in his own conceit ;

every scrap of memorandum had a gilt edge, as it were. One cannot suppose him suffering the children of his imagination to lie about in dirt and dust, behind the scenes of a theatre, at the haphazard care of actors, and caught up finally, by chance and in fragments, to be published under the dictum of the printers, and that, too, in an insular tongue that he did not believe would survive the next generation.

His love of order alone would have forbidden such carelessness with his manuscripts. It is said that everything that he wrote was kept with great care by his secretary in a cabinet in his library. That order was his habit, frequent instances in his writings attest. In his *Essay on Masques* he says, "They are nothing unless the room be well kept and clean." In the *tirsan's* feast (?) the room is "well kept and without disorder." In the entry of the sage they had no horsemen in the procession, fearing it would cause disorder, and the "street was wonderfully well kept;" the people did not jostle each other at the windows, but "stood as if they had been placed." In the 104th Psalm his reference to order may furnish to his admirers an overlooked similarity (?) to a line in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"The moon, so constant in inconstancy,
Doth rule the seasons orderly."

The disregard of the value of the manuscripts, or delay about printing them, from whatever cause it arose, which allowed them to lie at the risk of loss, injury and destruction, cannot be reconciled with Bacon's watchful care and preservation of all his productions. He pre-

served even the beginnings and introductions to articles that were never finished, and also copies of his letters, and directed in his will that all should be published.

It is singular that any one should attempt to attribute to Bacon the things that he so pointedly regarded with dislike; and it is more than singular to think seriously of ascribing to him such a colossal piece of stupidity as the cipher form of title. If he had wished to lay claim to the plays, he would hardly have chosen a way that nobody could understand. This manner of disclosing a secret by an intricate and unsolvable puzzle is, doubtless, intended to impress people with the great skill and profundity of the inventor, but it has only the effect of disproving it; for up to the present time, if any such thing can be supposed to exist, the puzzle has not done its work, and has only exposed the stupidity of its originator; and so it will be to the "last syllable of recorded time."

When Bacon wrote his last letter, in which he said his fingers were so stiff he could hardly hold a pen, he mentioned the experiment of stuffing the fowl with snow (which caused his death), and said the experiment succeeded remarkably well. This letter he wrote when he knew he was going to die, and he compares himself in it to the elder Pliny, who lost his life while exploring Vesuvius. That was just the time, if he had a weighty secret on his mind, that he would have divulged it. Just then one line from him that he was the author of the plays would have registered his claim, and his right to the title would have been proved or disproved before Shakespeare's friends had passed away. It would be

difficult to find a more marked instance of the "ruling passion strong in death" than Bacon's reference to this experiment when he knew it had been fatal to him; especially as it supposes that he must have made inquiry about it in the meantime, as his sudden illness prevented any personal investigation. His interest in that kind of investigation was so great that he could only relinquish it with his life, and he made it the subject of a letter when he was struck with death.

It is my conviction that all of Shakespeare's productions had less interest to Bacon and less value in his estimation than the experiment of snow as an antiseptic, and I do not believe that he considered Shakespeare or his art of sufficient importance to interrupt his "serious observations." Is there anywhere in existence the slightest evidence that shows Bacon ever to have expressed any interest, pleasure or admiration for works of fiction, imagination or art? The circumstance that caused his death, and his dying testimony as to his absorbing interest in scientific research, are conclusive as to the kinds of subjects that occupied his mind.

The supposition that Bacon wrote the plays and concealed his authorship through his desire for political advancement (although it has no force at any time) becomes ludicrous after he was sentenced, for bribery and corruption, to "pay a fine of £40,000, to be imprisoned in the Tower during the king's pleasure, declared incapable of holding any public office, place or employment, and forbidden to come within the verge of the court." His political career was then at an end; he was sixty years old, and could not hope for any fur-

ther honors. Shakespeare had been dead four years. If fear of marring his prospects had previously prevented him from writing *any* poetry whatever, he had no longer need to suppress his talent. He was released from the Tower and exiled in his house at Gorhambury, and during this time he wrote the versification of the psalms; the papers advocating a new religious crusade and a war for spoils, in the latter of which he described the rich mines of South America as the prospective plunder—which shows that his disgrace and banishment had neither shamed nor humanized him, as this paper is consistent with his earlier essays, where he speaks of the spoils as the “dazzling things capable of firing the most frozen spirits and inflaming them for war,” and as “one of the noblest and wisest things that ever was.” This was his situation and employment at the time Heminge and Condell were busy collecting the plays and publishing them.

They say in the dedication and preface, “We have but collected them and done an office to the dead to procure his Orphanes, Guardians, without ambition either of self profit or fame; only to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend and Fellow alive, as was our Shakespeare, by humble offer of his playes to your most noble patronage.” “It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv’d to set forth, and overseen his owne writings; but since it hath been ordain’d otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not enyie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected and published them.” The probability

is that these two noble fellows spent years upon the work. It was seven years after Shakespeare's death before the folio of 1623 appeared, and what they say of their "care and paine" is expressive of a great task finished, which is fully justified by the size of the volume. The world can never repay these two generous friends of Shakespeare for their tribute to his memory. It is not likely that they will be forgotten; but they deserve an enduring memorial that should fitly record the service they performed for mankind, when they were simply laboring to pay a debt of love.

If Shakespeare was so little known in his time, it argues that his plays held no very high place in the estimation of the "better sort," and this fact is attested by much similar evidence. They had no popularity or promise to attract Bacon's attention or tempt his cupidity.

The people who played such prominent parts in the politics of that age had no thought that the events in which they figured would become so familiar to posterity from the presence among them of a man whose calling they esteemed so little, whose genius they so inadequately recognized, and whose period of activity was so short. It is true that the plays drew large audiences. Leonard Digges, born 1588, wrote in 1640 that "when the audiences saw Shakespeare's plays, they were ravished and went away in wonder; and although Ben Jonson was admired, yet when his best plays would hardly bring money enough to pay for sea-coal fire, Shakespeare's would fill cock-pit, galleries, boxes, and scarce leave standing room." The plays were well received at court and popular among the people. The

presumption is, however, that those who wrote the political history of that time did not regard the theatre as of public interest, and did not expect it to lend any fame to their epoch. I have read the following account of the Globe Theatre: "It was octagonal in shape, and, with the exception of the stage, which was protected by a thatched roof, was entirely open at the top. The common people could enter as well as the rich. There were six-penny, two-penny, even penny seats, but they could not see without money. If it rained, and it often rains in London, the people in the pit—butchers, mercers, bakers, sailors, apprentices—received the streaming rain upon their heads. I suppose they did not trouble themselves about it. It was not long since they began to pave the streets in London; and when men like these have had experience of sewers and puddles, they are not afraid of catching cold. While waiting for the piece, they amuse themselves after their own fashion, drink beer, crack nuts, eat fruit, howl, and now and then resort to their fists, and they have been known to fall upon the actors and turn the theatre upside down. Above them on the stage were the spectators able to pay a shilling, the elegant people, the gentlefolk. They were sheltered from the rain; and if they chose to pay an extra shilling, could have a stool. Thus were reduced the prerogatives of rank and devices of comfort. It often happened that there were not stools enough. Then they lie about on the ground. This was not a time to be dainty." I have no doubt but that this is an exaggerated picture of the discomforts of the theatre. Certainly it must have been en-

closed ; but if it is even approximately true, it shows the improbability of a man of Bacon's stamp frequenting such a place or feeling any sympathy or interest in it or any one connected with it.

It seems as though the audiences at the theatre appreciated Shakespeare, but they were not the people who have left any record. As evidence that the plays received no favor at that time to attract Bacon, I quote, from well-known names, the following criticisms: "Shakespeare is a wit out of date and unintelligible" (Dryden). "A wit out of fashion, a coarse and savage mind" (Shaftesbury). "He had neither tragic nor comic talent. Nothing equals the absurdity of such a spectacle as the witches in *Macbeth*" (Forbes). "The comic in Shakespeare is too heavy, and does not make one laugh" (Foote). "The comic in Shakespeare is altogether low, and very inferior to *Shadwell*" (Warburton). "Voltaire qualifies the scene of the grave-diggers as the follies, characterizes the pieces as monstrous farces, declares that Shakespeare ruined the English theatre, calls him a barbarian, and wants to be delivered from the erring Shakespeare" (Hugo). Hume says of him, "It is in vain that we look for purity or simplicity of diction. He is totally ignorant of all theatrical art and conduct, deficient in taste, elegance, harmony and correctness ;" and concludes, "Ever since the English theatre has taken a strong tincture of Shakespeare's spirit and character ; and thence it has proceeded that the nation has undergone from all its neighbors the reproach of barbarism, from which its valuable productions in some other parts of learning

would otherwise have exempted it." "In 1725 Pope finds a reason why Shakespeare wrote his dramas. 'One must eat'" (Hugo). Blount and Jaggard struck out of Hamlet alone (1623 edition) two hundred lines; also two hundred and twenty-four lines out of King Lear. "In 1707 one called Nahum Tate published a 'King Lear,' warning his readers that he had borrowed the idea from a play he had read by chance, the work of some unknown author. The unknown author was Shakespeare" (Hugo). Tate was born 1652; died 1716. "He produced an alteration of Shakespeare's King Lear, which long held the stage to the exclusion of the original" (Appleton's Encyclopædia). Garrick played Tate's King Lear. George III. declared Shakespeare "poor stuff." Pepys declared the Midsummer Night's Dream the most insipid, ridiculous play that he ever saw in his life; Romeo and Juliet the worst; Twelfth Night silly, having no relation to the name or day; and Macbeth a most excellent play for variety. A book called the Golden Medley, published 1720, informed its readers that, "if it had not been for Shakespeare's Tempest, he would scarce have been allowed a place among the dramatic poets." "Addison left Shakespeare unnamed in his Account of the Greatest English Poets" (June Temple Bar). Greene says he is a plagiarist, a copyist, has invented nothing, is a crow adorned with the plumes of others. He pilfers from a dozen writers, which he names, himself among the number. Nothing is his. He is a blower of verses, a shake-scene, a Johannes factotum. Thomas Rymer says, "What edifying and useful impression can an

audience receive from such poetry? To what can this poetry serve, unless it is to mislead our good sense, to throw our thoughts into disorder, to trouble our brain, to pervert our instincts, to crack our imaginations, to corrupt our tastes, and fill our hearts with variety, confusion, clatter and nonsense?" I have copied these adverse criticisms upon Shakespeare in order to show that he had no standing or reputation that would attract Bacon or awaken in him any desire for fame from such a source. The stage promised neither present profit nor future renown.

The improbability of Bacon having written Shakespeare's works does not consist alone in his lack of genius and interest in the stage. In addition to this, much that Shakespeare has written Bacon would not, if only from an inborn revulsion against its sentiment. I mean such poems as the Rape of Lucrece, and what will be understood without description. Bacon was vulgar, coarse and disgusting (he did not know it), but he was never licentious. Some of Shakespeare's broad writing that has brought upon him such epithets as immorality, obscenity and voluptuousness could never be attributed to Bacon. His nature was the negative of any inclination in that direction. There is no word or allusion of a thing of that kind in any account of him ever written; no scandal, no departure from the most correct and virtuous fidelity to the respect due himself and his home. The habit of his life and thought was in the channel of correct demeanor and the observance of all forms and proprieties. All of his writings have *this* groundwork of virtue and morality. He had not even a milk-warm

nature to tempt him to fervent vows and lascivious thoughts. He was as free from a suspicion of licentiousness as a stone image. He courted the widow Hatton, by proxy, three months after her husband's death.

Of his wife, the rich alderman's daughter, it is said very little is known, except that her name was Alice and she had a temper. Satires written at that time insinuate that Alice did not share her husband's contempt for love's "hyperbole," and that while his vision was busy with "higher purposes," the "little idol" with a temper found society which preferred her to the heavenly bodies that her husband considered the proper subjects of contemplation.

A letter from Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain mentions Bacon's marriage on the 11th day of May, 1606, and says, "Sir Francis was married yesterday to his young wench in Maribone Chapel. He was clad from top to toe in purple, and hath made himself and wife such store of fine raiment of cloth of silver and gold that it draws deep into her portion." In his will he left her a box of rings, "save the great diamond." He had other jewelry, however, not in this box, for he willed a crushed diamond to some nobleman. As his wife displeased him in some grave way he revoked in his will some former disposition in her favor. She afterwards married her "gentlemanly man-usher."

Macaulay says Bacon was never charged by any accuser, entitled to the smallest credit, with licentious habits. How is it possible to associate such sentiment as the poem of Lucrece and many of the plays contain,

with a man whose nature is so cold that his description of love fills the object of his "choice" with dread and alarm! If his love essay is his honest thought, then it is impossible to suppose him the author of any love poem or scene, and especially one of Shakespeare's. He strove for the reputation of wisdom, gravity; for veneration, and for fame in history. The condemnation of all that was embraced in stage acting as corrupt, and of sensual poetry or anything tending to lasciviousness, was a part of his profession. Such things as his admirers are seeking to adorn him with would have been repugnant to his nature, and have shown him thoughtless of his dignity, careless of his ambition and forgetful of his reputation. The attempt to prove that Bacon was in sympathy with the stage and play acting is everywhere contradicted by his expressions of distaste for it.

It will not be admitted by any one that the writer of the plays could have been devoid of the spirit that pervades them, or indifferent about their success. Their music could never be as sweet, their humor as delightful, their philosophy as true or their people as natural if they had been the work of a man who had no conscience in his art or kindred in his characters. It is impossible that one whose nature was not overflowing with the spirit of romance, poetry and adventure, and who was not inspired with a love of the creations of his fancy and imagination, could have touched the human heart as Shakespeare has done.

While some people of the present day are so incredulous as to Shakespeare's learning, and so unwilling to admit that he possessed sufficient familiarity with the

literature of his day to have produced his works, it is reassuring to contrast their doubts with the attacks made upon him by his rival contemporaries. Greene, for instance, who knew Shakespeare well, and "whose Pandosto afforded Shakespeare the plot for his Winter's Tale," charges him with pilfering from Æschylus, Boccaccio, Bandello, Holinshed, Belleforest, Benoit de St. Maur, Lugamon, Robert of Gloucester, Robert of Wace, Peter of Longtoft, Robert Manning, John de Mandeville, Sackville, Spenser, Sidney, Rowley, Decker and Chettle.

It is remarkable that poor Greene in his jealousy of Shakespeare should have furnished such an unintentional denial of the charge of Shakespeare's illiteracy. It would be absurd to suppose that he would accuse him of pilfering from these sources if he did not know them to be accessible to him. It is more than doubtful if it required a familiarity with the classics to become familiar with these authors, as they were probably all translated into English. While Bacon was travelling back toward antiquity, there were others who were arraying the ancients in English costume. "The three Roman plays, Coriolanus, Julius Cæsar and Antony and Cleopatra, were derived from North's *translation* of Plutarch's Lives (1579); Troilus and Cressida from Ludgate's Troy Book (printed 1513), and Chapman's *translation* of Homer (1596). All's Well that Ends Well, from a *translation* of Painter's Palace of Pleasure, of the ninth novel of the third day of Boccaccio's Decameron. The story of Much Ado about Nothing is found in Spenser's Faerie Queene, founded upon

a story in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516).” By these dates we know that Homer, Plutarch and Boccaccio were translated before these plays were written. The seven historical plays, also *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, were drawn from the *Chronicles of Holinshed*. There is nothing to prove that Shakespeare did not read languages with as much ease as Bacon. Such knowledge was more common then than now. The facilities for acquiring it were abundant. Priests, monks and schoolmasters were proficient. Pope is an apt illustration, although somewhat later. *Encyclopædia Britannica* says of him, “The delicate child’s book-education was desultory and irregular. His father’s religion excluded him from the public schools. Before he was twelve he got a smattering of Latin and Greek from various masters, from a priest at Hampshire, from a schoolmaster at Twyford, from another at Marlebone, from a third at Hyde Park Corner, and finally from another priest at home. He thought himself the better in some respects for not having had a regular education.”

Do not the Baconites believe in genius? Do they think Bacon possessed none, or do they think he had it all? How do they account for such children as Pope, Macaulay, Jeremy Bentham (who studied Latin at the age of three, French conversation at five, and was matriculated at college at thirteen), or such a prodigy as Crichton, whose skill, intellectually and physically, verged on enchantment? Do they expect to convince people that Shakespeare could not have written the plays, by exaggerating the difficulties of acquiring a reading knowledge of languages that every schoolmaster

understood, and which was the fashion at that time? Even poor drunken Greene seems to have possessed the linguistic knowledge, the supposed lack of which has furnished an argument for the writing of volumes to prove Shakespeare could not have written the plays. The writings of Shakespeare's detractors abound in references to Bacon's biographers, and they endeavor by insinuation to make it appear that they partially favor their theory. This is absolutely unfounded. There is no shadow for such an impression. They are full believers in Shakespeare, and Devey says he created a new language. I doubt if any one can honestly believe Bacon wrote the plays, after reading his versification of the 104th Psalm.

In the articles which have been written to show parallels between Shakespeare and Bacon, the former, almost without exception, is in verse and the latter *always* in prose. There is never any comparison of style, but it is the subject and the similarity of certain words to which attention is called, and even then it is often difficult to discover the similitudes. It seems to me, also, that it is very far-sought comparison to endeavor to prove that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays by evidence that the writer of the plays had a knowledge of the authors that Bacon has *copied* in his memorandums; especially as these writings were mostly translated and translators were easily found. These resemblances are mostly cited in Bacon's Promus, which is a collection of notes (over 1600) which he jotted down for future use from what he read and heard. They are not sketches; and among them all there is not a hint

of the story or plot of one of Shakespeare's plays. I fully appreciate the need of notes to an author. Fancy is a mistress full of moods, to whose visits, whenever they may chance to come, her votaries are always attentive, and incidents are vivid when they are fresh. I have read some of Hawthorne's notes that were stories in embryo; but Bacon's notes were not fancies or incidents: they were words, exclamations and sentences. They had about the same relation to the article in which they might afterwards appear as Mr. Vincent Crummles' "real pump and washing-tubs" to the prospective play that Nickleby might write, and many of them were about as wooden: a school-boy sort of trick of saving up a lot of words to eke out compositions and produce effects. They were his veritable "apparatus of rhetoric;" the "doors, windows, staircases and back rooms to be skillfully contrived." They were not his own thoughts, but material that he picked up to be worked into anything that he might have in hand, and they account for what I have said in a previous chapter of his extraordinary habit of quotation. They are the things Bacon calls "unmade up." Their preservation in the British Museum also shows that he did not destroy his manuscripts. When the meaningless and ordinary character of much of this Promus collection is considered, it will show my description to be reasonable and not cheap ridicule, as I fear it may at first appear; indeed, these notes are of so promiscuous a character that even Spedding, Bacon's greatest admirer, says "it is sometimes difficult to understand why these particular lines should have been taken and so many others, ap-

parently of equal merit, passed by;" but he accounts for it by the most flattering conjecture, and seems to have no doubt but when the expressions come to be "made up" Bacon will fully justify himself. Here follow some instances of Bacon's title to Shakespeare's plays:

Promus, note 1404: "O the." *Shakespeare*.—"O the heavens!" (Tempest, i. 2, twice). "O the devil!" (Richard III., iv. 3). "O the time!" (Hamlet, v. 1, song). "O the gods!" (Cymbeline, i. 5; Coriolanus, iv. 1). "O the good gods!" (Antony and Cleopatra, v. 11). "O the vengeance!" (Hamlet, ii. 2). "O all the devils!" (Cymbeline, i. 5). "O the Lord!" (2d Henry IV., ii. 4). "O the blest gods!" (King Lear, ii. 4).

Promus, note 1221: "Amen." Then follows a passage from Macbeth in which "Amen" occurs four times, and a note follows saying that "Amen" occurs *sixty-three* times in the plays. They might by this test prove that Bacon wrote the Bible.

Promus, note 1211: "The Cocke."

"Come, stir, stir, stir! the second cock hath crowed."

—*Romeo and Juliet*.

I do not think it worth while to cite these examples at any length. There is, however, no better argument against the Baconites' theory than some of these volumes written in support of it. This book (Mrs. Pott's) abounds in the most unfinished expressions, to all of which she has fitted parts of Shakespeare's plays, and yet there is not one that makes any allusion

to a character, a plot or an incident in one of the plays; and the same is true of all other works of the same nature. Mr. Abbott, who wrote the preface to Mrs. Pott's work, felt himself constrained to state that he could not accept her conclusions, and that whereas she thought the plays borrowed from the Promus, his belief was that the Promus borrowed from the plays.

Note 1223 of the Promus:

"You could not sleepe for y^r yll lodging."

For similarity to this:

"Why doth the crown lie there upon his pillow,
Being so troublesome a bedfellow?
O polish'd perturbation! golden care!
That keep'st the ports of slumber open wide
To many a watchful night," etc.

—*Second Part Henry IV.*, iv. 4.

"(We sleep) in the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy."—*Macbeth*.

That is a most singular description of ill lodging.

Note 1548:

"La faim chasse le loup hors du bois."

Similarity:

"The other lords, like lions wanting food,
Do rush upon us as their hungry prey. . . .
Let's leave this town; for they are hare-brained slaves,
And hunger will enforce them to be more eager;
Of old I know them; rather with their teeth
The walls they'll tear down than forsake the siege."

There are hundreds of pages of comparisons as absurd as these, and which, in my opinion, are conclusive

proofs that the man who made such a collection could not have written with freedom, ease or spontaneity ; and it is singular that one can continue to feel any interest in this subject after becoming convinced that the writer of the plays needed such commonplace prompting. If I were trying to prove Bacon the writer of the plays, I would wish that the *Promus* were not his almost as much as I should regret his versification of the 104th Psalm, of which his admirers are evidently entirely ignorant or ashamed, having omitted to quote it.

One of the most emphasized instances of a likeness in the writings is note 1207, *Golden Sleepe*. The similarity is :

“Where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.”
—*Romeo and Juliet*.

The question of probability is whether Bacon, seeing *Romeo and Juliet*, should miss the finer parts of a play in which the “lover thinks so absurdly well of the party loved,” and, his ear being caught by the sound of “golden sleepe,” he should jot it down for future rhetorical effect, to be “made up” into “frontispieces” of “Traditive Prudence ;” or whether, having met with it elsewhere, he should use it as a reminder in composing verses in which it had no relation to the sense, and was the least striking part, as “golden” could better be spared from these lines than any other word in them.

Some other words thus caught and secured are : (1294) watery impression ; (1312) neutrality ; (1230) hot cockles ; (1231) good night ; (1232) well to forget ; (1224) I cannot get out of my good lodging ; (1221)

Amen; (1215) uprouse, you are upp; (1213) court howers; (1189) good morrow—ninety-six times in the plays; (1190) good swoer—for similitude, “good even” occurs eleven times in the plays; (1191) good travaille; (1192) good matens; (1193) good betimes; (1180) betts, lookers on, judgment; (1181) groome, porter; (1183) oddes, stake, sett; (1168) art of forgetting; (1158) abomination; (1152) it is Goddes doing; (1132) for learning sake; (965) no smoke without fire; (964) might overcomes right; (957) we be but where we were; (952) pride will have a fall; (878) owles egg; (864) armed entreaty; (818) cream of nectar; (718 *a*) to way ancre. These are a few of the notes that Mrs. Pott has set forth in an octavo volume of 628 pages to show that Bacon wrote the plays. To all of them she has adjusted some Shakespeare passage. From note 1216, “Poor men’s howres,” she has made up a whole page from Henry V. and VI. It is seldom that the actual word occurs, but there is something like it—some distant relative perhaps.

It simplifies an argument greatly when one side to it is willing to accept, in support of its claims, the statement of the other side, and this certainly no believer in Shakespeare need hesitate to do. Although Mrs. Pott finds such strong resemblances in the passages she sets forth, they may be confidently recommended to all Shakespeare readers, as their forced and strained nature simply exposes the weakness of the claim. Without intended discourtesy or disregard of the respect due one who has done such a work in proof of her faith, Mrs. Pott’s book reminds me of a social amusement called

“What is my thought like?” in which one person whispers an object, and another a subject, to each of the company, and then it is the part of each one in turn to describe some resemblance between the two. It seems to me that this is the game that Mrs. Pott plays in her book. Bacon furnishes her with an object, and in Shakespeare she finds a thought, and then fits them together according to the measure of her own cleverness rather than by any inherent similarity; for instance, “polished perturbation,” “golden care” and “restless ecstasy” as descriptive of ill lodging. Those who have played at this with clever people will remember what unexpected and extraordinary resemblances are often discovered, and also what ingenious absurdities can be invented. It was not necessary, however, for Mrs. Pott to take the *Promus* for this purpose. There are very many books that would have been infinitely more suitable. When Shakespeare’s plays are before one, it is possible to find some suspicion of a resemblance to almost any word or expression in the English language. No one with the fancy to write *Mother Goose* would need to have his imagination prodded or his “understanding twitched” by such a medley of ordinary and unsuggestive notes. They indicate that his writing was of a laborious, methodical and mechanical character; and the discovery in the British Museum of Bacon’s “preparatory store for the furniture of speech” (*Spedding*) is calculated to weaken the belief in his originality rather than to prove him a poet, “with seething brain” and “imagination all compact.”

CHAPTER VIII.

What is known of Shakespeare during his life—Bacon's books and handwriting—His debts and enmities—His secretary—Cecil's letter to Bacon—Impossibility of writing in concealment—Shakespeare's independence of character—The play of Richard II.—Puritanical hostility to the theatre—Shakespeare's fortune.

THE idea of the little that is known of Shakespeare during his life is greatly exaggerated, and must be attributed to the natural desire to know everything concerning him. He is as well known as could be expected from the circumstances under which his life was passed. If he had written about himself, as Bacon did, the incidents of his life would have been fully known; or if he had been a politician or a courtier, more would have been known of his personal traits. But if he had possessed all of Bacon's book learning it would not have given him any prominence in the history of the times while he only employed it in his profession.

A man of Shakespeare's tastes, with his conception of the beauty of truth and nobility in human nature, could hardly have found anything to attract him in the life of a court where lying was a fine art, even if he could have gained admission there. Yet that was just the place that possessed the most irresistible attraction for Bacon, from his youth to his death. Shakespeare's work proves him to have been a studious and industrious man; but it was in a field that denied him any

popularity with the historians of his time, for none of them, I think, mention the stage.

Among the reasons urged to prove that Shakespeare was not an educated man, one is that no book known to have belonged to him can be found now, after two hundred and seventy years. The same is true of Bacon's books, however, for Spedding wonders what has become of them, as few, if any, have survived. It is hardly worth while to reply to such arguments. A man might have access to books without owning them, and things of such a perishable nature might be destroyed in a few hours, in a fire like that of the Globe Theatre in 1613. It would not be much more ridiculous to argue that the only people in this country who wore clothes or had any furniture, a century ago, were a few of the revolutionary patriots, notably Washington, as only some garments, etc., belonging to them have been preserved. Likewise, upon the perpetual-chattel mode of reasoning, Stephen Girard was an exceptional instance of a man of his time "clothed and in his right mind."

Another ground for the conclusion that Shakespeare was not the writer of the plays is his signatures to his will, written about a month before his death—under what circumstances certainly no one will presume to know. I imagine that if the last letter that Bacon wrote, when he said his fingers were so stiff he could hardly hold a pen, could be compared with the signatures to Shakespeare's will, it would prove him to have been an unconscionable ignoramus, upon the same style of argument. The players undoubtedly learned their

roles from Shakespeare's manuscripts. There is a lithograph fac simile in the fly-leaves of Mrs. Pott's *Promus* which I suppose to be Bacon's chirography. Compared to it, Shakespeare's signatures are Spencerian. Mrs. Pott does not refer to it, so far as I can find. I have tried to read it with a magnifying-glass, but in vain. It may be the chicken letter, or it may be the key that solves that nondescript tongue mentioned in the *New Atlantis*, which "Hebrews, Persians and Indians could read as if written in their own language." It has three or four blots on it as big as wafers, and does not bear out the Baconites' theory that learned men produce neat and legible manuscript.

In contrast with the love and affection with which Shakespeare was regarded by his fellows and all who speak of him, and his unbroken friendships with his company of players during the many years of association with them, what a record of enmities and hatreds does Bacon present! His one friend was Essex, whose blood he "helped to shed, and whose memory he defamed." Ben Jonson admired him as a debater, and wrote some eulogistic lines of him on the occasion of his sixtieth anniversary, on the eve of his public disgrace. Devey, who says, "Should we direct our views to physical science and the creation of material arts, . . . , we shall be compelled to grace Bacon's temples with the proudest wreaths of glory," says also, "Had he not inhabited a princely mansion on the Strand and kept a plentiful table at Gorhambury, Ben Jonson, instead of lauding him, might have censured with Hume, and Hobbes have been as niggardly of praise as Bayle. It

was the possession of the Great Seal that made it fashionable to read what few could understand, pushed his works into circulation during an unlettered age, and gave him Europe for an auditory." If among his contemporaries there is any testimony of the love of a friend, or praise of a noble quality, I have not found it. His superiors held him in contempt, his equals despised him and his inferiors ridiculed him. He had no element of popularity and no qualities to win esteem or confidence. His life on his part was a hunt after court favor, and on the part of the public a hunt after him by his creditors. Extravagance, show, debt and corruption! He not only would not pay his debts, but he tried in the most shameless way to shuffle out of them. His mother paid many of them under protest against his extravagance and his associates. She complained of his servants (the names of more than one hundred and fifty are published), "that bloody Percy, a coach companion and a bed companion, a proud, profane, costly fellow;" another, "filthy, wasteful knave," and the "Welshmen who swarm unfavorably." His brother Anthony was in constant trouble endeavoring to rescue him from suits and financial straits, and to arouse him to a sense of duty. In one instance, failing to induce him to perform some service for which he had received a large sum, Anthony wrote to the other party offering various lame excuses for Francis, and assured him that he would not forget to do his part which his brother "hath left softly slide from himself upon me."

Although Bacon died fifteen thousand pounds in debt,

he left five hundred pounds to his servant Mewtys. I suppose this is the Meantys who erected a monument to him, with an inscription to explain that it exhibited him as he sat—"sic sedebat." This monument does not accord with Devey's description of Bacon, but looks like a self-satisfied, rather jovial and prosperous squire. Devey says, "He imagined that he could add many years to his life by systematic doses of nitre, and took about three grains in weak broth every morning for thirty years. He also placed great faith in macerated rhubarb to carry off the grosser humors of the body without the inconveniences of perspiration, and swallowed an occasional draught before his meals. . . . His severe habits of study early impressed upon him the marks of age, bent his shoulders, and gave him the stooping gait of a philosopher."

Meantys was Bacon's secretary and amanuensis probably, as he has described him in a sitting posture as if thinking and dictating. Their relation must therefore have been very intimate, and it is a reasonable wonder whether it would be possible for one so situated to do any considerable amount of work (doing the writing himself, which was probably not his custom) and conceal it from his secretary who had charge of his papers and the materials in his library. He certainly could not do it there. Consider the extent of such an accomplishment: what a way of tossing off these wonderful productions such a performance would indicate! We know that during this time Bacon was "hanging about the court," waiting for Essex to influence the queen in his favor. He was thus engaged so constantly

that on one occasion Cecil wrote him a scolding letter for "snatching a few hours to visit his mother who was sick at Gorhambury," as the queen might overcome her scruples and speak to him, and it would be unfortunate if he were not there, as "it might be straight dispatched if luckily handled." We know that he studied law and physics, wrote essays and carried on a voluminous correspondence. Consider, therefore, what it would have been for a man whose time seems to his historians to have been so fully occupied, to have added to it a work (quite out of his sphere, requiring a stage knowledge that he certainly did not possess), which in itself is almost incredible as the production of one man in the time it appeared, and add to this the claim that it was done under circumstances impossible for that kind of accomplishment, *i. e.*, fear of surprise, dodging his secretary, hiding his manuscript, destroying all evidence of his work, inventing pretexts to be alone and managing clandestine communication with a man well known, in a small city. These are certainly the conditions that must exist under such a hypothesis. Consider then what necessity existed for such a stratagem: simply to deceive the queen—to hide from her Bacon's dramatic genius! She did not consider him deep as it was, and the purpose of this plot seems to have been to confirm her in her judgment. She would not give him office, because she had no faith in his talents other than legal, therefore the thing most essential to her favor was just that ability that this unfathomable mystery finds it necessary to conceal. These are the kinds of

evidence that people will weigh who are trying to discover the probability of Bacon's authorship of the plays. They will also, I think, ask why, if Bacon had any part in them, they ceased with Shakespeare's connection with the stage. Bacon was only fifty-one at that time, and he lived fifteen years longer; but no more plays appeared, and he wrote no poetry unless the versification of the Psalms can be so considered. Of them his biographer Abbott says, "A true poet, even of a low order, could hardly betray the cramping influence of rhyme and metre. . . . I cannot help coming to the conclusion that, although Bacon might have written better verse on some subject of his own choosing, the chances are that even his best would not have been very good." Bacon was thirty years old before any of Shakespeare's plays appeared, and outlived Shakespeare ten years; yet neither before nor after the dates of the plays did he give any signs of poetic genius. The divine spark appears in most unexpected places, but it has no such freaks as that. There never were any plays written with Shakespeare's mind in them except when Shakespeare was here to write them.

Mr. Fleay, in his life of Shakespeare, says, "In March, 1601, in the Essex trials, Meyric was indicted for having procured the outdated tragedy of Richard II. to be publicly acted at his own charge for the entertainment of the conspirators. [I find Meyricke's name spelled in five different ways.] From Bacon's speech (State Trials) it appears that Phillips was the manager who arranged the performance. This identifies the company as the chamberlain's, and therefore the play

as Shakespeare's. It may seem strange that a play, duly licensed and published in 1597, could give offence in 1601; but the published play did not contain the deposition scene (iv. 1); the acted play of 1601 certainly did. This point is again brought forward in Southampton's trial: he calmly asked the attorney-general what he thought in his conscience they designed to do with the queen. 'The same,' replied he, 'that Henry of Lancaster did with Richard II.' The examples of Richard II. and Edward II. were again quoted by the assistant judges against Southampton, while Essex in his defence urged the example of the Duke of Guise in his favor. From all of this it is clear that the subjects chosen for historical plays by Marlowe and Shakespeare were unpopular at court, but approved of by the Essex faction, and that at last the company incurred the serious displeasure of the queen. Accordingly, they did not perform at court at Christmas, 1601-2; and we find them travelling in Scotland instead."

Mr. Fleay also mentions the following instance to show Shakespeare's independence of character: "Shakespeare's company being forbidden to act by the lord mayor because certain players in the city handled matters of divinity and state without judgment and decorum, went to the Cross-Keys and played that afternoon, to the grief of the better sort, who knew they were prohibited. The mayor then committed two of the players to one of the comptors." Mr. Fleay says, "It is pleasing to find Shakespeare's company acting in so spirited a manner in defence of free thought and free speech. It would be more pleasing to be able to iden-

-tify him personally as the chief leader in the movement, and this I believe he was."

This picture contradicts the idea of his being Bacon's tool, creature or mask. It is improbable that a man of Bacon's conservative, order-loving instincts would have any fellowship or connection with a man who had not more regard for the "better sort," and who had such strong friends among the disaffected toward the crown, or would take such a hostile attitude toward the sectarian prejudice of the community. The man that Bacon would select would not be of Shakespeare's stamp.

Another instance is related by Mr. Fleay, showing how just was the esteem felt for Shakespeare by friends and acquaintances, as follows: "The *Passionate Pilgrim* reached a third edition and was reissued as certain amorous sonnets between Venus and Adonis, by W. Shakespeare, 'whereunto is added two love epistles' between Paris and Helen. These were stolen from Heywood's *Troja Britannica* of 1609. In his *Apology for Actors* (1612), he complains of the injury done him, as it might lead to unjust suspicion of piracy on his part, and adds, 'As I must acknowledge my lines not worthy his patronage under whom he hath published them, so the author I know much offended with Mr. Jaggard, that hath altogether unknown to him presumed to make so bold with his name.' In consequence, no doubt, of this remonstrance, Jaggard had to substitute a new title-page, from which Shakespeare's name was entirely omitted. He had allowed his name to be used in the titles of the *London Prodigal* in 1605, of

the Yorkshire Tragedy in 1608, of the Passionate Pilgrim in 1609, and even of Sir John Oldcastle in 1600, without murmuring; but directly the interest of another demands justice at his hands he takes prompt action, and compels the piratical publisher to withdraw his name altogether." This printer is one of the firm of Blount and Jaggard who printed the folio edition eleven years later.

The playing of Richard II. as a part of the indictment against the conspirators not only shows Shakespeare's independence of character, but Bacon's appearance as a prosecutor puts him in a hostile attitude toward the play.

I find the following in Macaulay's essay on Lord Bacon: "Everybody was now at liberty to speak out respecting those lamentable events in which Bacon had borne so large a share. Elizabeth was scarcely cold when the public feeling began to manifest itself by marks of respect toward Lord Southampton. That accomplished nobleman, who will be remembered to the latest ages as the generous and discerning patron of Shakespeare, was held in honor by his contemporaries chiefly on account of the devoted affection which he had borne to Essex. He had been tried and convicted together with his friend; but the queen had spared his life, and, at the time of her death, he was still a prisoner. A crowd of visitors hastened to the Tower to congratulate him on his approaching deliverance. With that crowd Bacon could not venture to mingle."

Long preceding Essex's outbreak Bacon did his utmost to restrain him, and tried as long as he could,

with safety to himself, to reconcile him to the queen. When he found that his advocacy of Essex's cause began to arouse the queen's suspicion against himself, he suddenly changed his course and voluntarily became the prosecutor of the conspirators, who were all convicted and sentenced to death at this trial, and, with the exception of Southampton, were executed. As the prisoners were not allowed counsel, the proceedings took a tone of personal altercation. In reply to a speech of Bacon, Essex said he would quote Mr. Bacon against Mr. Bacon, and then he told how Bacon had written two letters to be shown to the queen; one he had signed Anthony Bacon, and worded it as though intended to provoke Essex; and the other he had signed with Essex's name, and in it "he laid down the cause of my discontent and pleaded as orderly for me as I could for myself." Bacon, at first discomfited, replied that he had "spent more hours to make Essex a meet servant for her majesty" than he desired. This was undoubtedly true; but the falsehood toward the queen and the treachery toward Essex were not explained away by it. These letters are in print.

My purpose here, however, is to show that Bacon had no fellowship or faith in Essex's disaffection toward the queen, and not to multiply instances of his ignobleness; yet it is hardly possible to speak of any event in which he bore a part without uncovering some act of gross meanness and duplicity. Southampton, who was Essex's closest friend during all these troubles, and was general of the horse under him in the Irish campaign, was Shakespeare's patron, to whom he had dedicated his

Venus and Adonis and Lucrece. Under such circumstances it was only natural that Shakespeare and his company should be found near his friends, and that they should have been present to play for the Essex faction; but his presence among them cannot be reconciled with any possibility of a bond existing between him (Shakespeare) and Bacon, or of Bacon's having the least influence over him. Shakespeare's attitude at this time is singularly strong evidence that he was not Bacon's creature, for if such a relation existed, Bacon was quite at Shakespeare's mercy.

This is Bacon's account of the play as it was used in evidence against the conspirators: "The afternoon before the rebellion Merrick, with a great number of others, that afterwards were all in the action, had procured to be played before them the play of deposing King Richard II.; neither was it casual, but a play bespoke by Merrick, and not so only; for when it was told him by one of the players that the play was old, and they should have loss in playing it, because few would come to see it, there was forty shillings extraordinary given to one of the players (Philips), and so thereupon played it was. So earnest was he to satisfy his eyes with the sight of that tragedy, which he thought soon after his lordship should bring from the stage to the state, but that God turned it upon their own heads." Bacon was offensively active at the trial in urging the treasonable bearing of this play as evidence of the designs of the conspirators. Sir Gilly Meyrick's trial took place a few days after Southampton's, and he wrote to Southampton that "Bacon was

very idle, and I hope he may have the reward of it in the end." Supposing Bacon to have written the play, then he is arraigning these men for treason upon the ground of their having chosen a play written by himself to illustrate their treasonable purposes, and Shakespeare is standing mutely by to see his patron and friends sacrificed, when one word from him could easily silence Bacon. It cannot be held that the writing of the play was treasonable, for the play had been written anterior to these events, and not for any such purpose; yet when the play first appeared, the deposition scene was interdicted by the master of the revels, and this representation was probably the first time that that scene (iv. 1) had been performed. The play had a great success when first brought out, and is said to have been acted forty times, sometimes in the streets of London, but this objectionable scene was suppressed. Therefore it may easily be imagined what a weapon against Bacon these men could have made of it, if the facts had been in accord with the Baconite theory. Shakespeare's independent stand shows at least that his sympathies were with his friends, and it cannot be imagined that he would not have aided them by a hint that certainly would have destroyed all the effect of Bacon's legal wit, and would have driven him out of court and might easily have sent him to the Tower. Can any one suppose that Bacon would have failed to see the force of such a counter charge, or would have exposed himself to the chance of it? If he had been so placed, his only safety would have been to anticipate what he would have foreseen must surely happen, and to con-

fess his innocent connection with this part of the indictment in advance of the accusation. His standing with the queen was very insecure. Spedding and all his biographers enlarge upon the disfavor against Bacon both at court and among the people. Macaulay says the queen had begun to suspect him, and Bacon says, "She did directly charge me that I was absent that day at the Star Chamber, which was very true, but I alleged some indisposition of the body to excuse it."

Abbott says this is not true, and that he urged some reason calculated the more to exasperate the queen against Essex. It is evident that the queen was watching Bacon closely. Chamberlain in his history cannot account for the queen's severe treatment of Hayward, and I have read a number of criticisms of her actions at this time in the same strain; but Mr. Fleay, although speaking in regard to another subject, throws a light upon the queen's position which fully explains her feeling. He says "it (Richard II.) was produced before the publication of the pope's bull in 1596, inciting the queen's subjects to depose her. In consequence of this bull the abdication scene was omitted in representations and in the editions during Elizabeth's lifetime. In like manner Hayward was imprisoned for publishing in 1599 his *History of the First Year of Henry IV.*, which is simply the story of Richard's abdication." It will be seen, therefore, the playing of the deposition scene was a defiance of the queen. It had been suppressed by her will because it described the same fate of an earlier English king as the pope

sought to accomplish against her. A book dedicated to Essex, who was in rebellion against her, and a play acted for the conspirators with this scene restored, which had been forbidden, could only be understood as directed at her.

What then would have been the anger of the queen if it had been suddenly discovered on the trial that Bacon was the author of the play! It would have assumed an importance that did not attach to it as written by a man who had no political ambition or standing, and must have thrown a suspicion upon him that would have at least demanded an investigation.

To realize the effect of such a revelation in the course of these proceedings, Bacon's position, standing and character must be borne in mind, not morally, but his well-known ambition for things the opposite of amusement and diversion. The surprise at a sudden discovery that this man was playing a double part, and that his real character was so different from his assumed one, would have thrown the court into a state of consternation, and drawn attention from the prisoners and turned it upon the attorney, and it would have been the startling feature of the trial. It would have caused an intermission, at least, in favor of the prisoners, and demanded a severe examination to determine what other concealment existed; and during that time Bacon would reasonably have suffered confinement with the others.

I do not think I over-estimate the bearing upon this subject of Bacon's attitude toward the play of Richard II. and toward Shakespeare in this trial. This is a

question mainly of probability; it is by realizing, as nearly as possible, the circumstances and the events, that the probabilities must be weighed. It is singular that history should have placed the principals of this controversy in such an antagonistic position to each other, and I do not know of attention having been called to it. One of the accused (Essex) was Bacon's benefactor, from whom he had received the gift of Twickenham Court. The other (Southampton) was Shakespeare's patron, to whom he had dedicated two of his poems, and who is supposed to have made him a very generous gift of money. In this historical event we know that Bacon had forgotten the benefits received and had taken a position in deadly hostility to his benefactor, and the Baconite theory places Shakespeare in the same despicable light without even a motive.

The personal wrangling in this trial, upon insignificant points, shows how eagerly the accused strove to defend themselves, and it cannot be thought that they would have failed to retaliate upon Bacon had they known of such an opportunity. The matter, then, is reduced to a question whether Shakespeare could have possessed such a secret and not revealed it to his friends in the hope of saving their lives. From Shakespeare's attitude toward the Essex faction, his company playing a scene suited to the designs of the "conspirators," and from the fact of the company not returning to play at court at the Christmas holidays, it is plain that the queen was displeased with them, and that Shakespeare was in nowise controlled or influenced by Bacon. Then the Baconites must invent some new theory to prove

Shakespeare to have been as mean and ungrateful as their idol, in order to account for his silence—his silence at first while his patron was on trial for his life, and afterwards while he lay in the Tower awaiting execution; silence in the interest of a man with whom no instance has ever shown him to have had any personal acquaintance; with no cause and against reason, personal interest and gratitude.

It is simply a question whether Bacon could possibly have appeared as a prosecutor in these State Trials under such circumstances. If he had written a scene that might afford entertainment and encouragement to a faction hostile to the government, instead of appearing in court and goading the offenders, it is more probable that he would have quaked with fear, sued for forgiveness, "prudently put the blame upon others," and endeavored to explain away its suspicious or objectionable meaning.

He was not obliged to appear against the prisoners. Hume says, "The most remarkable circumstance in the Essex trial was Bacon's appearance against him. He was none of the crown lawyers, so was not obliged by his office to assist at this trial; yet he did not scruple, in order to obtain the queen's favor, to be active in bereaving of life his friend and patron, whose generosity he had often experienced."

Macaulay says, "What course was Bacon to take? This was one of those conjunctures which show what men are. To a high-minded man, wealth, power, court favor, even personal safety, would have appeared of no account when opposed to friendship, gratitude and

honor. Such a man would have stood by the side of Essex at the trial, would have spent all his power, might, authority and amity in soliciting a mitigation of the sentence, would have been a daily visitor at the cell, would have received the last injunctions and the last embraces on the scaffold, would have employed all the powers of his intellect to guard from insult the fame of his generous though erring friend. Bacon did not even preserve neutrality. He appeared as counsel for the prosecution. In that situation he did not confine himself to what would have been amply sufficient to prove a verdict. He employed all his wit, rhetoric and his learning, not to insure a conviction—for the circumstances were such that a conviction was inevitable—but to deprive the unhappy prisoner of all those excuses which, though legally of no value, yet tended to diminish the moral guilt of the crime, and which therefore, though they could not justify the peers in pronouncing an acquittal, might incline the queen to grant a pardon.”

I have not inserted this extract from Macaulay to add anything more to the evidence of Bacon’s insensibility to any high or noble qualities, but to show the glaring impossibility of reconciling his attitude in these trials with the theory of his connection with the play which was a part of the indictment. Macaulay, unconscious of any such necessity, furnishes a plea for his absence, had he simply desired to show his gratitude to his benefactor in recognition of benefits received. If to that could be added the fact that such a course was dictated by personal safety, then how rash and suicidal does his conduct appear !

Recklessness of this kind is the opposite of any opinion ever formed of him. Macaulay says, "He seems to have been incapable of feeling strong affection, of facing great dangers, of making great sacrifices; his desires were set on things below." And his historian, Joseph Devey, M.A., says, "In 1593 he sat for Middlesex and delivered his maiden speech in favor of law reform. The praises which followed so intoxicated him that in an ensuing debate on the subsidy he broke out into a flaming oration against the court, denouncing the claim as extravagant, and dwelling with pathetic sympathy upon the miseries which such exactions must cause among the country gentry, who would be constrained to sell their plate and brass pans to meet the demands of the crown. Bacon carried his motion for an inquiry, and struck all the courtiers with horror and amazement. The queen, highly incensed, desired it to be intimated to the delinquent that he must never more expect favor or promotion. The spirit of the rising patriot was cowed; with bated breath he whispered expressions of repentance and amendment, and never afterwards played the patriot further than was consistent with his interest at court."

Whatever may be the estimate of his intellectual power, there was none of the stuff in him that makes conspirators, traitors, rebels, martyrs or heroes. Bacon in his *Apology* gives an account of his interview with the queen in regard to the Hayward book; and his (Bacon's) friends (by what reasoning I do not know) find some ground in it for supposing that the queen suspected Bacon of having written the book; conse-

quently he wrote Shakespeare's plays. The queen may for a moment have suspected him of the dedication, as she knew his debt to Essex, and knew how Essex had sued for him while he waited outside; but it was not a question of literary ability; it was a search for proofs of treason.

It is more than probable that Bacon drew the queen's attention to Hayward's book (it had been in print several years), and that he was the cause of Hayward's arrest and imprisonment, and it is probable also that he drew the indictment containing the play. One writer comments upon Bacon's clear understanding of the indictment, whereas Coke confused the book and the play. Abbott says Bacon's habit was to describe things rather by the "sequel" than the "fact," and this interview is evidently an instance.

There is no word, so far as is known, that was ever uttered or written by any contemporary of Shakespeare, or until over two hundred years after his death, that even hints at a disbelief in his authorship or in his ability to write the plays and sonnets. His association with his fellow actors was most intimate. He was one of a great number of play writers of his time; notably, Marlowe, Greene, Decker, Sackville (who wrote the earliest known tragedy in the English language, "Gorboduc," which was performed before Queen Elizabeth, January 18, 1562), Jonson, Rowley, Peele, Lodge, Drayton, Fletcher, Kyd, Wilkins, Wilson, Tarleton, Tourneau, Davenport, Heywood, Chapman, Nash and Chettle.

It is known that at first he wrote parts only of some

plays, and that he was associated with Fletcher, Marlowe and Davenport in writing for the theatre. The attack upon him by Greene as "the upstart crow" and "Shakescene" was known to the whole theatrical fraternity, and was much discussed; so also was his estrangement with Ben Jonson. If he had been an illiterate man, Greene would have attacked him as such, and not as a plagiarist who simply took plots and characters from other authors; and Greene's sneer at him as a "factotum" attests his activity in the business of his company.

Jonson speaks of him as the "gentle Shakespeare" in reference to the portrait on the frontispiece of the folio edition of 1623, and pays also a tribute to his wit that sets entirely at rest any question as to his belief in Shakespeare's genius and ability. It must be remembered that London was a city of only about one hundred thousand inhabitants at that time, and the nature of the profession caused theatrical people to become very well acquainted with each other.

There were most active jealousies in London between the theatrical companies; some of the political disputes of the time were alluded to on the stage, and the church party was strongly opposed to the theatre. In addition to that, the plague in 1592 caused the theatres to be closed; and again in 1599 it visited London severely, and the city was not free from it for twenty years. In order to appreciate what the players had to contend with, and the little likelihood there was that Bacon, with his devotion to established forms, could have any sympathy, acquaintance or connection what-

ever with men so far out of the pale of his respectability, one must know how strong was the opposition to the theatres.

“In those days the frequent visitation of plagues made men fear the gathering together of multitudes. This dread of pestilence, united with a puritanic hatred of plays, made the citizens do all they could to discountenance theatrical entertainments. The queen acknowledged the validity of the first reason, but she repudiated the religious objections, provided ordinary care was taken to allow such plays only as were fitted to yield honest recreation and no example of evil” (*Encyclopædia Britannica*).

On April 11, 1582, “the lords of the council wrote to the lord mayor to the effect that, as her majesty sometimes took delight in those pastimes, it had been thought not unfit, having regard to the season of the year and the clearance of the city from infection, to allow of certain companies of players in London, partly that they might thereby attain more dexterity and perfection, the better to content her majesty.”

“In November, 1589, in consequence of certain players in London handling matters of divinity and state without judgment and decorum, one Mr. Tylney writes Lord Burleigh that he utterly dislikes all plays within the city, and Lord Burleigh sends a letter to the lord mayor to stay them. Thereafter commissioners were appointed to examine all plays, and a license was required” (*Fleay*).

“On the 8th of February, 1604, there occurs an entry in the revels accounts which explains the small

number of theatrical performances and the cessation of work of the principal author (Shakespeare) for the king's men in 1603. To R. Burbadge was given £30 for the maintenance and relief of himself and the rest of his company, being prohibited to present any plays publicly in or near London by reason of great peril that might grow through the extraordinary concourse and assembly of people to a new increase of the plague, 'till it shall please God to settle the city with a more perfect health" (Fleay).

"From July, 1603, 'till March, 1604, the theatres were probably closed. Shakespeare's company (the king's men) were most likely travelling in the provinces 'till the winter, but were disappointed at not being allowed to reopen at Christmas, when the plague had abated" (Fleay).

"All the theatres were built outside of the jurisdiction of the municipality of the city, which being Puritan in its tendencies, had long carried on a war against the players and all theatrical entertainments. The corporation of London argued that such amusements tended to the 'desecration of the Sabbath and saints' days,' that they brought young people together under 'unmeet circumstances,' that they were but encouragers of intemperance and tavern brawls, that they caused a sinful waste of money, which had better be given to the poor, that they were the means of many people being hurt by falling of scaffolds, and by the weapons and gunpowder used during the performances, and that through the bringing together of such great crowds, they tended to increase and disseminate the plague" (Baldwin).

These accounts are the history of that time, and they show that "stage acting in the profession of it" was "disreputable," as Bacon asserted. It was under the ban, subject to interruption, suppression and command of the ruling power, and existed only by indulgence. It is unquestionable that had not the plays furnished amusement for Queen Elizabeth and afterward King James, and for certain noblemen who did not sympathize with the puritanical spirit of the time, the theatres would have been entirely closed, as they were a few years later. It is notable that even more plays were given at the Christmas festivities during the reign of King James than in Queen Elizabeth's reign.

"On the 2d of September, 1642, by order of the two houses of Parliament, the theatres were closed, as a becoming measure during the season of public calamity and impending civil war." In January, 1648, another ordinance was passed forbidding all theatrical entertainments, and directing the theatres to be rendered unserviceable. The Puritans, in their zealous determination to force all classes to become devout, declared that the acting of theatrical plays should be considered a crime and punished as such, and more than this, that even witnessing of such plays was a misdemeanor. Dramatic representations were thus entirely proscribed until the year 1656; nor indeed were they restored to favor until the accession of Charles II. in 1660 (Baldwin). Can any one doubt on which side of this controversy Bacon would have been found if the court had been hostile to the theatres? Do people realize that had Shakespeare's career been cast fifty years later than it was, the domin-

ation of the puritanical spirit which closed the theatres, "during which period no plays were written" (Baldwin), would doubtless have made it impossible to produce the plays? They were not finished in the manuscript, but were largely created on the stage. How much genius for art and literature has perished by the same spirit of sectarian rule no one can ever know. It is almost impossible to name a man in thirteen hundred years of history who sought to teach progress in art (uneccelesiastic), science or humanity who did not find it his enemy and persecutor. In Shakespeare's time there was no field in which his genius could find expression except on the stage; and it is singular that the pastimes and amusements of the most self-indulgent sovereigns should have afforded a permit, or it might be said granted a license, by which the richest jewels of poetry could have birth in an age of savage theological persecution. The testimony of the history of the time is conclusive that the theatres existed by favor and protection of the court. During the time of Cromwell they were closed. A case which describes the attack of the Puritans upon the court for its encouragement of the theatres is that of William Prynne. In 1633 he published a violent attack upon the immoralities of the stage, and asserted in it that kings and emperors who had favored the drama had been carried off by violent deaths; he also applied a disgraceful epithet to actresses. Just at that time the queen (who was very fond of dramatic entertainments) was taking part in the rehearsal of a ballet, and the offensive words were supposed to apply to her. Prynne was sentenced by the Star Chamber, put in the pillory

and had his ears cut off. Prynne's offence was eight years after Bacon's death and in the reign of Charles I. It does not seem as though any reason more absurd could be concocted for the supposed concealment of dramatic genius than that it would prejudice the court against the claimant for royal favor. If Bacon's period had been in Cromwell's time such a theory would have answered the purpose; but it was just the reverse in the reigns of Elizabeth and of James I. It was purely by their favor that Shakespeare existed as a player and poet.

The kind of life that the actors must have led under the censorship of authorities so adverse to their existence, and the enmity of so large a proportion of the people, would naturally bind them together and draw them into closer companionship; and certainly no one among them as prominent as Shakespeare, who was known as the author of the plays, and who put them all on the stage, could possibly have won the regard of his fellows and attained his position and reputation if he had not proved himself worthy of it. And the same is true in regard to Southampton's friendship for him.

There is no question but that Shakespeare accumulated money. Yet there is nothing in the condition of these theatres that indicates that they were prosperous. We do not hear of any other writer or actor who succeeded in that way. We have Ben Jonson's ridicule of Shakespeare's company's "blind jade and a hamper, pumps full of gravel, stalking upon boards and barrel-heads to an old cracked trumpet," and we know that thirty pounds were given to the company for its relief, and Shakespeare's company demanded forty shillings extra for

performing the play of Richard II., because it was old and they feared it would not draw; and in 1604 an allowance was made them to buy cloaks to appear at the entry of King James. If it should also be shown that play writing was not even remunerative, then the only temptation that is supposed to have influenced Bacon would be removed. This of course cannot be done, but appearances all denote that it was not. Even Shakespeare's leaving the stage while he was comparatively a young man indicates that he found it a thankless occupation. It is possible that his poems brought a good return. They had a great sale, five editions being called for in nine years, and the gift from the Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated his *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, is said to have been sufficient alone to account for all he possessed. These are not questions that can be decided. They must rest upon probability.

All the evidence marks Shakespeare as a man of great independence of character, retiring disposition, studious industry, honesty and generosity. He won and retained to the end of his life the love and respect of all who knew him intimately, and produced and set upon the stage in a comparatively short time a wonderful volume which has no equal in the literature of the world.

CHAPTER IX.

The record of Shakespeare's connection with the theatre and the plays performed before the court—Ben Jonson's sketch of Shakespeare—The court's protection of the players and slight esteem for Bacon's writings—Entry of King James into London.

A NEWSPAPER article signed Thomas Davidson, and published a few months since, says, "Now Heminge and Cundell were fellow actors with Shakespeare. He left them each twenty-six shillings and eight pence 'to buy rings.' How long they had known him, and what means they had of determining what, if anything, he had written, we have no means of discovering. Heminge died in 1630; Cundell, 1629."

It is singular that any one should venture to make such a careless statement; and in order to show what an abundance of facts exists to disprove it, I copy some dates from Mr. Fleay's book, which show that these men and Shakespeare were members of the same theatrical company for an average lifetime:

"On May 6th, 1593, a precept was issued by the Lords of the Privy Council authorizing Lord Strange's players, Edward Allen, William Kempe, Thomas Pope, *John Heminges*, *Augustine Philipps* and George Brian, to play where the infection is not, so it be not within seven miles from London or of the court, that they may be in better readiness hereafter for her majesty's service.' This list of names is by no means complete, but prob-

ably does consist of all the shareholders therein. Shakespeare was not a shareholder yet."

Of this company, Thomas Pope and George Brian were in the Earl of Leicester's company, which visited Stratford in 1587 (six years before), and with whom Shakespeare is supposed to have left Stratford. Augustine Philips was the one who arranged the play of Richard II. for Sir Gillie Meyricke eight years later (1601) at Essex House. John Heminge is the actor mentioned in Shakespeare's will twenty-three years after, and who *thirty years* later, together with Henry Condell, collected and published Shakespeare's plays in the folio edition of 1623.

The Earl of Leicester had died in 1588, and the company found a new patron in Lord Strange, and became known as Lord Strange's men. Lord Strange died in 1594, and then they became known as the lord chamberlain's. But Mr. Fleay says, "There is no vestige of evidence that Shakespeare ever wrote for any other company than this one," which is, however, known under these various names.

"The chamberlain's company at this date (1594) included *W. Shakespeare*, R. Burbadge, *John Heminge*, *Augustine Philips*, W. Kempe, T. Pope, G. Bryan (all of whom, with the possible exception of Burbadge, had been members of Lord Strange's company), together with *Henry Condell*, W. Sly, R. Cowley, N. Tooley, J. Duke, R. Pallant and T. Goodall, who had previously been in all probability members of the queen's company."

This is positive evidence of Shakespeare's association

in 1594 with the two men who published his plays in 1623. "This company played *Hamlet* June 9th, and *Taming of the Shrew* June 11th, 1594. They played again in the same year, December 26th and 28th, before the queen at Greenwich, apparently in the day time. Kempe, Shakespeare and Burbadge were paid the following March. They played again a number of times at court in the winter of 1595, and payment was made to Heminge and Bryan.

"There were the usual court performances in the winter of 1596-7.

"Winter of 1597-8 the company performed four plays at Whitehall, one of which was *Love's Labor Lost*.

"In the spring of 1599 Shakespeare's company left the Curtain and went to act at the Globe. The names of actors mentioned in one play at this time are Burbadge, *Heminge*, *Philips*, *Condell*, Sly and Pope. At Christmas three performances were given at court, viz., December 26th at Whitehall, January 25th and February 4th, 1600, at Richmond.

"Winter of 1600-1 there were three court performances, December 26th, January 5th, February 24th.

"March, 1601, in the Essex trials Meyrick was indicted 'for having procured the out-dated tragedy of *Richard II.* to be publicly acted at his own charge for the entertainment of the conspirators. From Bacon's speech (State Trials) it appears that Philips was the manager who arranged this performance.' In the winter of this year they did not perform at court.

"Winter of 1602-3 two plays were performed by

Shakespeare's company at court—one at Whitehall December 26th, one at Richmond February 2d.

“ March 24th, 1603, Queen Elizabeth died.

“ May 19th, 1603, a license was granted to L. Fletcher, W. Shakespeare, R. Burbadge, *A. Philips*, *J. Heminge*, *H. Condell*, W. Sly, R. Armin and R. Cowley to perform stage plays, within their now usual house called the Globe or in any part of the kingdom. They are henceforth nominated the king's men.

“ In the winter of 1603–4 Shakespeare's company gave nine different plays at court. In February, 1604, £30 were given to R. Burbadge and his men for the maintenance of himself and the rest of his company, being prohibited to present any plays publicly in or near London, by reason of great peril that might grow through the extraordinary concourse and assembly of the people to an increase of the plague, till it shall please God to settle the city in a more perfect health. From July, 1603, until March, 1604, the theatres were probably closed.

“ In 1604 Shakespeare's company (the king's men), like those of other companies, had an allowance for cloaks, etc., to appear at the entry of King James on the 15th of March. In the winter of 1604–5 they acted seven of Shakespeare's plays and three others.

“ In August the king had a special order issued that every member of the company should attend at Somerset House when the Spanish ambassador came to England.

“ On May 4th, 1605, Philips made his will, which was proved on the 13th. In it he leaves thirty shillings

each to Shakespeare and *Condell*, and twenty shillings each to Fletcher, Armin, Cowley, Cook and Tooley, all his fellows; to Beeston, his servant, thirty shillings; to Gilburne, his 'late apprentice,' forty shillings and clothes; to James Sandes, 'his apprentice,' forty shillings and musical instruments; to *Hemings*, Burbadge and Sly, overseers and executors, a bowl of silver of five pounds apiece.

"October 9th, 1605, Shakespeare's company performed before the mayor and corporation of Oxford, and in the winter of 1605-6 ten plays were acted at court.

"During July or August, 1606, Shakespeare's company performed three plays before King James and the king of Denmark, two at Greenwich and one at Hampton Court, and in the winter of 1606-7 they performed nine plays.

"On December 31st Shakespeare's brother Edward, 'a player,' was buried at St. Saviours, Southwark, aged twenty-eight, with a forenoon knell of the great bell.

"There were thirteen court performances by Shakespeare's company in the winter of 1607-8.

"The court performances 1608-9 were twelve.

"Winter of 1609-10 there were no plays, on account of the plague.

"In 1610 the chief players of the company were Burbadge, *Hemings*, Lowin, Ostler, *Condell*, Underwood, Cooke, Tooley, Armin and Egglegstone. There were fifteen plays performed at court at the Christmas festivities. In this year, 1610, Shakespeare is supposed to have written the *Tempest* and *Winter's Tale* and to have retired from theatrical work. Some make the

date of his leaving the stage 1613. On the 10th of March, 1613, Shakespeare purchased a house with yard and haberdasher's shop for one hundred and forty pounds, subject to a mortgage of sixty pounds. This property had greatly increased in value since 1604, when it was sold for one hundred pounds, probably in consequence of the immediate vicinity of the theatre, which drew large custom for feathers and other articles of attire at Blackfriars. Shakespeare leased it to John Robinson, who had by this time seen the absurdity, in a business point of view, of his opposition to the establishment of the theatre in 1596. One of the trustees for the legal estate (the mortgage remaining unredeemed until 1613) was *John Heming*, unquestionably Shakespeare's friend the actor." This looks as though Shakespeare had not forsaken London, although he may have parted with his interest in the theatre.

"On June 29th, 1613, the Globe Theatre was burned down. The play that was being given was Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. 'The old ballad about the fire says the reprobates prayed for the fool and Henry Condly (Condell), who were apparently the last actors who escaped.'"

All of these dates I have copied from Mr. F. G. Fleay's *Life and Works of Shakespeare*, which is a most careful study of this whole subject and a deeply-interesting book. I do not know where the history of the plays and the prominent facts in Shakespeare's life can be found in so pleasing and compact a form as in this volume. If people who think there is no way of "discovering how long Heminge and Condell knew

Shakespeare, and what facilities they had for determining what he wrote, if anything," will read Mr. Fleay's book, they will find their error about that kind of data, and will find facts enough about Shakespeare's life to surprise them that people should speak of him in any doubtful and problematic way. Indeed, there seems to be more known of his private life than of Bacon's, and its interesting facts are set forth in such an attractive form in Mr. Fleay's book that only the fear of taking such wholesale liberty with it has restrained me from copying much more.

From the data given by Mr. Fleay it appears that Shakespeare acted in the same company (for which he furnished thirty-seven plays) with *Heminge and Condell* from 1593-4 until 1610—sixteen or seventeen years. Of course their acquaintance commenced before 1593. When Philips made his will in 1605 and left thirty shillings to Shakespeare, they had been companions at least twelve years. As Shakespeare left tokens of remembrance to Heminge, Condell and Burbadge at his death in 1616, it is evident that their intercourse continued to that time, and therefore it is shown that the companionship of these men had existed at least twenty-two years at the time of Shakespeare's death. Their acquaintance antedated 1593; yet their known association is a remarkable record of friendship, particularly in a calling that naturally provokes the most extreme tests of patience and indulgence, and it is on all sides an evidence of sturdy and steadfast character.

I am pleased to believe that it was the wisdom that wrote the precepts for Laertes' memory, and the spirit

of "so worthy a Friend and Fellow as was our Shakespeare," which prevailed in the counsels of his company and bound them together "with hoops of steel." For my part, I cannot read the history of the court, the intrigues, jealousies, hatreds, plots and schemes of personal ambition, and the falsehood, suspicion and duplicity that marked all its intercourse, without an involuntary comparison between it and the bond of good will and honest comradeship that held these fellows together during a lifetime of devotion to their art and of unconscious service to futurity; and if the comparison be followed to Bacon, hired to defame the memory of his benefactor, on the one side, and on the other to the two players laboring without self-profit to do "an office for the dead," it is the limit of contrast.

Their love did not end with the poet's death. Seven years later, and thirty years after a known date of their association with him, these two men published, to the best of their ability, all they could find of his works, arranged in as perfect form as it was in their power to place it. It is reasonable to suppose that they had spent most of the time between Shakespeare's death and the date of publication in collecting and preparing the plays. They were not writers. Neither of them ever made any essay in that direction as far as is known. The liberty which the printers took with the manuscript indicates that the players either consulted them or were obliged to submit in some degree to their dictation.

It is probable from Ben Jonson's allusion to the players that all of Shakespeare's fellows joined in the work of collecting and publishing the plays, although

Heminge and Condell were the principals; and it is in harmony with the generous nature of the dear "old player," his good comradeship and modest estimate of his own gifts, that he should have left his plays to those who naturally seemed to inherit them when he left the stage, and to whom they were valuable.

In their effort to put the plays in their proper order, to discard what was spurious and retain the acting versions, they must have been guided largely by their memory, stage experience and familiarity with the representations, and in this respect they were the fittest men for such a work, even though their literary ability was not equal to that of the writers of the day.

The remarkable absence, in the poet's life and writings, of any desire to obtrude his personality upon the public notice, to make a place for himself in history, to contend for his own, and the elevation of art above personal ambition, literary rivalry or fame, are the qualities which oblige his lovers to seek outside of his own writings for aids to present him to their imagination. What was his estimate of himself, what merit he thought his work possessed, and whether he ever speculated upon its place in the literature of future ages, no one can learn by any expression from him. Unlike the rule of genius distinguished in poetry, he sang no song of himself, either of vanity or pity. While his contemporary felicitated himself that his work, carefully swathed in Latin, should supersede "all the systems of philosophy hitherto received or imagined," Shakespeare betrayed no consciousness that his life's work in a calling held in the lowest esteem would invest him

with any interest whatever in history. In everything these men were opposites. No two literary men could be more unlike.

The most valuable testimony that we have to describe Shakespeare is a few expressions of the love and esteem of his friends, fellows and contemporaries, which have come down to us in an accidental way, but they contain more than appears upon a cursory reading.

Ben Jonson's sketch in his *Discoveries* is one of the most valuable of these, and was probably prompted by the discussions among the theatrical people regarding Shakespeare during the time the players were collecting the plays for publication. He writes, "I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honor to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, Would he had blotted a thousand; which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted, and to justify mine own candor; for I loved the man, and do honor his memory on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was (indeed) honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped. His wit was in his own power, would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things that could not escape laughter, as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him, 'Cæsar, thou dost me wrong.' He replied, 'Cæsar did never wrong but

with just cause,' and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than pardoned."

I have observed that the Baconites, in quoting the foregoing, stop at the sentence "which they thought a malevolent speech," and thus use it to convey the impression that Jonson discredited the players' statement and sneered at their praise. This is plainly erroneous. He not only agrees with them, but goes on to cite instances in his own knowledge of the same facility in Shakespeare; but he does not admire it, and he thinks the players lack discrimination in choosing one of Shakespeare's least creditable qualities for their praise, which he evidently regards as "idolatry."

Jonson's criticism is worth far more for the picture it draws of Shakespeare than for his estimate of him as a poet. Of that there is no dispute; but of the qualities that Jonson attributes to him no one will question his competent judgment. It is in perfect accord with his opinion as expressed in many places in his *Discoveries*, on the subject of criticism, composition, poetry, eloquence, etc. He wrote a grammar, and regarded himself as authority, if not upon all subjects, at least on everything relating to literature. His criticism is very rarely in the vein of approval; with him very little praise seasoned an immense amount of faultfinding. Nothing less than the indisputable "brave notions," "gentle expressions" and generous nature of Shakespeare could ever have drawn from him the sketch I have quoted, or his verses in the frontispiece of the folio of 1623. He had no cause to flatter Shakespeare. He

had vented his ill-humor and indulged his vanity in Shakespeare's lifetime by ridiculing his plays and by some unhandsome conduct; and although this page was written in remembrance of the "gentle expressions" and of Shakespeare's bearing toward him, it could hardly be expected to accord him unqualified praise in the field of poetry in which his pen had labored so often to satirize him; but in regard to Shakespeare's character, wit, which "was his own," fancy and facility of speech it was as full, choice and enthusiastic as the most ardent friend of Shakespeare could desire.

Jonson was a scold; fond of dispute and contention. He seems to have been the one man too uncomfortable to remain in Shakespeare's company, and between whom and Shakespeare there was an estrangement. Mr. Fleay says, "No intercourse can be shown between them after 1603." He had a large development of a quality praised by Bacon—"if you will grant his opinion, let it be with some distinction." He killed an actor in a duel, was in prison a number of times, and seems to have been about as bent upon seeking a quarrel as Shakespeare was careful to avoid one. He desired, above everything else, to be regarded as honest. In his paragraph upon Shakespeare this motive is evident. He says, "I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance" and "*to justify mine own candor.*"

The wording of this speech sounds as though it were written in denial of an imputation, from the players, that his praise of "their friend" was not as full and complete as they would have it; and to defend himself from the charge of malevolence (simply because of his

unwillingness to follow them in their admiration of a facility of language which did not commend itself to his judgment) he went on to describe Shakespeare by rules of more scholarly discernment, to which he added the personal traits which had won his regard. He would hardly have said that he honored his memory *as much as any*, except in answer to a challenge or insinuation to the contrary; and in saying that he was *indeed* honest, he evidently repeated what the players emphasized, and cordially endorsed it. Also speaking of Shakespeare as *their* friend shows that he was not his friend in the sense of loyalty and fellowship that had existed between Shakespeare and the players.

It is difficult to see how any one can discredit Jonson's sketch of Shakespeare, or how, after reading it, any one can suppose such a man the mask of another, or that he could sink his own individuality. Jonson was not a man likely to invent merits where he could discover demerits. He ridiculed Hamlet, the Winter's Tale and the Tempest. In his opinion only laborious writing was good. He was almost as pedantic as Bacon, but infinitely superior to him as a writer of critical sketches. Although he helped Bacon translate his works, he has paid him a reversed compliment in his sketch on Essayists. He says, "Some that turn over all books and are equally searching in all papers, that write out of what they presently find or meet, without choice; by which means it happens that what they have discredited or impugned in one week they have before or afterwards extolled the same in another. Such are all the essayists, even their master, Montaigne.

These, in all they write, confess still what books they have read last, and therein their own folly so much that they bring it to the state raw and undigested; not that the place did need it neither, but that they thought themselves furnished, and would vent it."

In disparagement of the facility that flowed so easily in Shakespeare, Jonson cites "the incomparable Virgil, who brought forth his verses like a bear, and afterwards formed them with licking;" and of Euripides, "who, having brought forth only three verses in three days, and those with difficulty and throes," replied to Alcestis, who gloried that he could have produced a hundred, that the latter's would not last three days, while his would "to all time." He says again, "Things wrote with labor deserve to be so read, and will last their age." Again, "If the mind be staid, grave and composed, the wit is so; that vitiated, the other is blown and deflowered." Again he writes of the "easiness which makes itself justly suspected," and in this manner he gives pages of instruction as to how one should observe, consider, reflect, excogitate, seek, avoid, judge, amend, etc., etc., which is all very excellent in its place, but hardly requisite to the genius that wrote the *Merry Wives of Windsor* in a fortnight. Shakespeare spoke of him as "slow as the elephant, in whom nature hath crowded all humors;" and it is most natural that he should have told posterity of the ignorance of the players, who "chose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted."

In utter denial of the idea that play writing was not in favor at court, Ben Jonson is a conspicuous example.

King James was so much pleased with one of his masks (1621) that he granted him the reversion of the office of master of the revels, besides proposing to confer upon him the order of knighthood, and increased his pension two hundred marks. In 1628 he was appointed city chronologer, with a salary of one hundred nobles a year. He took the salary, but did not perform the services. In 1629 he wrote a poor comedy, and in the epilogue he dwelt upon the neglect he had experienced at the hands of the king and queen; and the king (Charles I.) sent him a gift of a hundred pounds, increased his salary to that amount, and in addition made him a royal gift of a tierce of canary annually.

Although literary merit was sure of recognition in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James I., Bacon's writings found little favor. Neither his essays nor his metaphysics suited the taste or temper of the court. The queen thought his literary pretensions shallow, and the king never read the works which Bacon dedicated to him, but made a pun upon his masterpiece. The only use the queen had for Bacon was as an attorney; and his advancement under James I. was not due in any sense to his erudition, but was purely a reward for his abject servility and moral obliquity. Dickens says, "I know of nothing more abominable in history than the adulation that was lavished on this king and the vice and corruption that such a barefaced habit of lying produced at his court. It is much to be doubted whether one man of honor and not utterly self-disgraced kept his place near James I. Lord Bacon, that able and wise philosopher, as the first judge in the kingdom in this

reign, became a public spectacle of dishonesty and corruption, and in his base flattery of his sows, and in his crawling servility to his dog and slave, disgraced himself even more."

In contrast with Bacon's fawning servility to King James, Shakespeare has nowhere honored his existence by a line. The contrast exists also in Henry VII., of whose reign Bacon wrote a long, prosy history, while Shakespeare passed from Henry VI. to Henry VIII. in his historical plays.

What the Puritans condemned in King James as his vices represents to me the only side of his character that is not utterly despicable. In fact, the picture most attractive to my imagination in the history of the court is that of those amusements and festivities in which for a moment it ceased from and forgot its dreadful business of government.

By the court's defence of the stage and its friendly protection and encouragement (from whatever motive) of the theatrical companies, Shakespeare was permitted to produce his plays; and the man who stood in the crowd at the entry of King James, clad in a cloak furnished him by the government, has shed a glory upon the history of that period and invested its principal personages with an interest entirely foreign to the motives that controlled political events.

"This wide and universal theatre
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
Wherein we act in."—*As You Like It*.

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